# MISCELLANEOUS

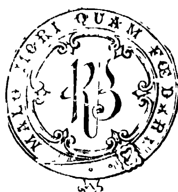
# PROSE WORKS.

BY

EDWARD BULWER, LORD LYTTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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# NOTE TO THE READER.



In these volumes are for the first time collected into one whole, miscellaneous criticisms and essays written in different periods of life, from early youth to the commencement of old age. Naturally, therefore, they embrace an unusual variety of subjects, suggested by such acquaintance with books, and such experience of life, as so long a space of time may have afforded to one who has ranged over a somewhat wide surface of literature, and been brought into active contact with many diversities in the characters and pursuits of men. In such a collection there cannot fail to be many blemishes which no revision, however careful, will remove. Differences of age necessitate inequalities of treatment; essays written in early youth will be too light for some; those written in later life too dry for others. The first dealing chiefly with sentiment will be often too sentimental; the last dealing chiefly with reflection will be often too reflective: and in a whole, of which the several parts have been composed at such wide intervals of time, there can scarcely fail to be sometimes repetitions, sometimes contradictions, of speculation or opinion. For these and similar defects, if excuse be needed, I can venture to make none.

But perhaps in the main cause for the blemishes thus frankly owned may be found the best chance of that originality which consists in the exposition of any single mind, throughout a long course of years, in those native and acquired differences from the minds of others which mark its characteristics and constitute its idiosyncracy.

Whatever the worth of these volumes, they will be thought, perhaps, a not unnecessary accompaniment to the works of fiction by which I am more popularly known as a writer,—comprising as they do a repertory of the opinions and sentiments, the reveries and the reflections, the studies of mankind and the critical theories of art which, herein expressed subjectively to the influences of my own mind, are objectively represented in the world of fable by images invented to realize or to typify the truths of life.

One word as to the contents of the volumes :—

The first volume consists of criticisms contributed to our principal Reviews, to which, since most of them treat of human character as well as of books, the biographical sketch of Schiller is appended; the second, of essays written in early youth, of which the greater part originally appeared under the title of 'The Student;' with the exception of the concluding one, not hitherto published, upon the influence of Love on literature and life; the third, of essays written in mature years, and first published under the title of 'Caxtoniana.'

TORQUAY, Jan. 28, 1868.

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# THE REIGN OF TERROR

## ITS CAUSES AND RESULTS.

[First published in 'THE FOREIGN QUARTERLY REVIEW,' July, 1842.]

# THE REIGN OF TERROR.

## ITS CAUSES AND RESULTS.

[*Souvenirs de la Terreur de* 1788 *à* 1793, par M. GEORGES DUVAL. (Recollections of the Reign of Terror, from 1788 to 1793, by Georges Duval.) Paris, 4 tomes. 1841-2.]

"*JE raconte ce que j'ai vu.*"—"I relate that which I have seen!" With this avowal M. Georges Duval opens his Recollections of the Reign of Terror. The announcement is certainly attractive. But M. Duval is one of those generous writers who are always better than their word; he not only relates what he has seen, but a great deal that it was utterly impossible for him to see, and, as revelations of the latter class are vouchsafed to us with the same detail and precision as the former, we are forced to acknowledge M. Georges Duval to be a person of that lively imagination, with which 'to moralize a song' is not always 'to stoop to truth.' The plain fact is, that our author's hatred of the actors and events of the French Revolution is so intense, that, where he cannot relate as a witness, he, by no means unfrequently, invents as a partisan. With all the naïveté of Herodotus, he gives us the particulars of interviews at which he was not present, and the exact dialogue of conversations which admitted of no eavesdropper. Besides this happy gift of invention, Nature has bestowed on M. Georges Duval a turn for banter and raillery; and even when relating circumstances in which he was a party concerned, his love of ironical humour and his benevolent

desire to amuse the reader lead him into sundry witty exaggerations and travesties, which, while they prove his agreeable qualities as a writer, detract from our faith in him as a historian.

These allowances made, there however remains to the volumes before us much to instruct the student in his survey of the men and the times of which they treat. M. Duval confesses in his Preface the indignation with which he "regards the numerous books that have been written under the fallacious title of Histories of the Revolution, being in truth nothing better than impudent apologies for that epoch of ruin, of blood, and of tears."

It is easy to conceive the feelings of irritation and disgust with which an honest man who had actually lived amidst the horrors of Paris in the Reign of Terror, who had seen the tumbrils passing his windows to the Barrière du Trône, who had beheld the infuriated mob butchering a gray-haired man discovered to be a Christian pastor, and shouting round the gory head of a woman convicted of pity for her benefactor,—must regard the philosophizing excuses and argumentative dogmas which some would-be Friend of Liberty, and Lover of the People, issues from the security of his closet.

It is unquestionably true, indeed, that in the vices of the old *régime* we must seek the causes of the revolutionary crimes. To nations yet more than to individuals must be referred the awful menace that the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the sons. But no less true is it to all, whom philosophical refinements have not besotted, that humanity itself is endangered if we allow the circumstances that conduce to guilt to steal away our natural horror of the guilt itself. Rigidly speaking, all guilt is but the result of previous circumstance. To neglected education, to vicious example, we may trace the crimes which send the thief to the hulks and the murderer to the gibbet. But we do not therefore hold excused Jack Sheppard

and Daniel Good. What education and example are to the man, government and legislation are to the people. We shall do right if we blame the causes which make a demon of the multitude, but wrong if we regard the demon itself only as the suffering angel.

It is not our intention, however, to go over the beaten and hackneyed ground of the hateful time commemorated by M. Duval. We propose rather to cut a rapid and somewhat irregular path through the mighty field before us, in search only of those facts and principles which appear to us to suggest something new and not unimportant in the philosophy of history.

The era of Modern civilization, as distinct from the Feudal, begins in France with the large and determined policy of Cardinal Richelieu. And it is from this period that we are to date the primary causes of the Revolution of the Eighteenth Century.

A high churchman and an absolute monarchist, the twofold object of Richelieu was carried out with the rigidity of a strong mind thoroughly in earnest. To reduce Dissent into the One Church—to change the functions of Aristocracy from the check upon Monarchy into the ornament of a Court; for these objects he lived, and these objects he accomplished, upon the whole, with rapid and singular success. He had the qualities necessary to his purpose. That which he himself called his mission could not have been fulfilled had clemency accompanied his sense of justice, or cowardice occasioned his vigilant circumspection. His severity, never capricious, though often cruel, was conducted on a broad and intelligible system: it never invaded the lives and properties of the masses; it more often secured their properties and lives, by terrible examples amongst the nobles, whose struggles were nearly always associated with the criminal designs of a civil war. In his aim at absolute monarchy he was far too comprehensive a statesman to meditate the erection of

an oriental despotism, for he loved France even better than Monarchy. He desired to make France secure and integral. For this he humiliated Austria—for this he dislodged the Huguenots from Rochelle (that harbour of the disaffected)—for this he crushed every subject powerful enough to disturb the peace of the country. And for this he effected a change which Le Clerc properly notices as of great importance in the consolidation of the monarchy. Hitherto the principal strongholds had been held by governors for life; he swept away at one stroke offices so dangerous in a time when the nobility could still struggle against the throne, and substituted governors whose tenure was too short to allow them to be other than the servants of the Executive. But in consolidating monarchy his policy tended to create subjects—not slaves. He favoured commerce and trade. He gave greater security to justice, and more impartial regularity to law. He desired—so far as his wretched literary taste, and his literary jealousies yet more wretched, would permit—to encourage and circulate the refinements of intellectual cultivation. To him France is indebted for the Academy, which, if not productive to literature, at least raised literature into honour. An eminently practical man, he was aware of a truth so obvious that it is incomprehensible how the governments of Europe so commonly fail to observe it, viz. that no state is secure where the expenditure is disproportioned to the revenue: and he bequeathed an immense treasure, and, with due allowance for the notions of the time, a sufficiently effective system of finance, as a legacy to that throne, which he had found the weakest, to leave the most powerful, in Christendom. The effects of Richelieu's policy were immediately apparent in the society of France, under the reign of Louis XIV. The descendants of the turbulent barons of the League became the courtiers of Versailles. The provincial castles were deserted, retainers had passed into peasants, the

old ties between the highest and the lowest order were rent away. And there already yearned a far wider gulf between the gay gentleman of Paris and his tenant harassed for rent, than existed in a ruder generation between the rural noble and his village neighbour familiarized to each other by habitual intercourse.

With the struggles of the House of Valois had commenced that spirit of nationality which united all Frenchmen against the foreigner—with the complete ascendency of the House of Valois-Bourbon commenced that disunion of classes which will always follow the establishment of Absolute Monarchy, when accompanied by the progress of the middle class and the decline of the noble.

The main characteristics of their nation and their class were still retained by the *gentilhommes*, howsoever modified by the changes of circumstance and time: they preserved the same lighthearted and daring gallantry, so distinct from the stubborn fortitude of the Anglo-Saxon, and the steady and stern valour of the Anglo-Norman. Corrupted by the life of a capital and a court, the love of pleasure degenerated into the passion for debauch; strictly honourable towards men according to the chivalric notions of honour, they deemed all meanness, duplicity, and ingratitude justifiable in regard to women. The sanctity of married life will usually be found more or less respected in proportion to the ease or impracticability of divorce for offences against fidelity. The Catholic Church, by which divorce was forbidden, left to the husband no option but connivance at his dishonour, or the ridicule of impotently proclaiming it. The vanity of the French nobles, and that experience of the salons which they termed *savoir vivre*, made them regard as the height of ill-breeding, and the consummation of absurdity, that jealous respect for the chastity of their wives which in all nations is the attribute of men to whom

custom or law gives the power to preserve it—whether the Mahometan, who can drown, or the Protestant, who can divorce the delinquents. Pecuniary considerations, which are invariably the great cementers of established wrong or conventional right, tended to reconcile the injured party to his conjugal infelicities. Marriages were those of convenience; if the bridegroom knew nothing of the bride's character beforehand, he made himself thoroughly acquainted with the extent of her dower; and the fortune of the wife, while it gave her a right to an insolent independence of conduct, consoled the husband for the loss of a heart which he had never wooed. But the most marked distinction between the French aristocracy and the English, and the one which operated the most fatally to their downfall, arose (and this has never been sufficiently considered) from the early extinction of the Representative System. That safeguard of modern society, though always liable to great abuses, necessarily clumsy in its machinery, and perhaps hereafter, in some distant age, to be laid aside for calmer modes of legislation and government, has this immense advantage,—it opens a healthful field for the energies and ambition of the great, and a field that can be only cultivated by familiar intercourse with their inferiors. An election brings all classes together, unites them in common links of passion and interest;—there can be no dangerous and prolonged separation between classes where elections are popular and frequent. What the Feudal system was in binding together the baron and the vassal, the Electoral is in binding together the great proprietor and the husbandman—the great merchant and the artisan—the rich and the poor: there is a link of iron between the most ambitious statesman and the meanest voter. It was just at the time when the Representative System was most needed in France, that is, in the dissolution of the old forms and usages which cemented the

different ranks, that it was extinguished by the ambition of the Executive.

The education of men insensibly adapts itself to the objects of ambition open to their future career. The rich gentleman or the powerful noble in England has before him the one ambition of public life—and to this a large proportion of the higher class is imperceptibly trained: hence, in spite of much that may be false and prejudiced in the intellectual cultivation through which they pass, it is impossible but what the minds of the English aristocracy should become more manly, practical, business-like, and robust, than the members of a correspondent class in a country where public life, properly speaking, existed not—where ambition had no opening, except in the army or the saloon—where a graceful person, a charming manner, a happy *bon-mot*, were the best passports to a place at court, a celebrity in society, a rich marriage, nay, a colonelcy in the army. Hence, on the other hand, was formed that peculiar polish of civilization for which the French *noblesse* were remarkable, and of which the history of the world has probably no correspondent example. Grace, manner, wit, conversation—all that could amuse, interest, fascinate their equals or superiors—these were, to the French patricians, what knowledge of business and the art of speaking, and the hard qualities of public life, were and are to the English. Habits consequent on such accomplishments were necessarily those of generosity and ostentation,—in other words, of *expense*. The expense was supplied by the most grinding exactions on a peasant tenantry, or the most flagrant jobs on the public resources—additional reasons for the separation between ranks. It is astonishing how completely unfit these brilliant personages were for any other existence than that which they corrupted and adorned. While the army was entirely officered by the nobles, while the nobles alone seized or sold every place at the court,

and filled the church with odious sinecures—their unpriestly *Abbés* monopolizing the benefices of dignitaries, and leading openly the lives of *roués*—the administration of the country, the power, the business of the state, were left, for the most part, without an effort, to the members of the *bourgeoisie*, or the bar. While in England the administration of affairs was more and more falling into the aristocratic hands which have since wielded it, in France the administration became more and more the monopoly of the *roturiers*. It was not from the highborn *fainéants* that such men as Colbert and Turgot could arise.* The French gentleman, contented with the brilliant flutter of the butterfly, had none of the vulgar industry of the bee.

It was impossible that, as time went on and ripened reflection—it was impossible that such a class could long retain an established power in the state. Of the state they made no part, and they were only visible in legislation by the intrusion of privileges equally insulting to common sense, and obnoxious to common justice. Rapidly, too, in their reckless prodigality they were destroying the sole foundation on which an aristocracy can rest—property! When the baron can no longer awe by the number of his followers, the noble can only impose by the extent of his rent-roll. It is true that as a body the Aristocracy still shared with the Church the possession of the far larger portion of the lands; but agriculture declined, mortgages increased, and the lands rather served for the oppression of peasants, than for adequate resources to the extravagance of the lords. About the middle of the reign of Louis XV., along the Seine and along the Loire, dismantled chateaus, starving serfs, untilled fields, were the visible signs of a fastly falling order.

* Even in the Revolution itself, it was not among their Prelates and their Dukes that the privileged orders could find the energy and intellect of defenders—it was left to a Maury and a Cazalès to represent the Nobles and the Church.

Thus, in the following reign, the French seigneur became not only unpopular,—he became despised. If a Leveller of our own time and land were to paint the English Aristocracy according to his prejudice or opinion, he might describe them as hateful, but certainly not as despicable. Men never can despise the powerful. The power of the English aristocracy is everywhere and in everything—power in wealth—power in lands—power in the state—power in the affections they command from large classes not belonging to them—power in the intellect which enables them, in the open contests of party, to bear comparison with men of the highest attainments in inferior grades, and to justify by their talents the offices they aspire to from their birth. The English aristocracy have few privileges and much power; the French had many privileges and no power. Yet unquestionably the latter, with all their faults, were a sparkling, accomplished, and charming race. And it is impossible to contemplate their life as it is seen, still living and ever imperishable, in the countless Letters and Memoirs which form the most unrivalled part of the French literature, without that admiration which is extorted from our taste in despite of our severer judgment. Though ruthless as seigneurs, they were affable as masters. Between the cavalier and the servant there was in reality the same familiar affection that we see in their old comedy. If insolent in prosperity, in adversity they were always gallant. Lauzun, almost a scoundrel in the court, is almost a hero in the prison. The exquisite polish of their breeding so contributed to the cheerfulness of the society in which they moved, so sought to bestow pleasure and shun the infliction of pain, that they were scarcely wrong when they gave to Manners the title of "The Minor Morals." Though but indifferently educated, they had an enlightened affection for letters and art. They were not good men, but they were certainly fine gentlemen.

In the mean while was growing up that Middle Class, fostered and encouraged by the policy of Louis XI. and the master intellect of Richelieu. From an early period the ambition of this class was visible; but as it could not show itself on the floors of a Parliament, in the English sense of the word,* it thrust its way into the meaner openings afforded by the boudoir and the saloon. The comedy of Molière exhibits that desire of the *bourgeoisie* to ape the manners, to vie with the follies, and to court the company of the nobles, which was not a very prominent feature in English society till a much later period. The power to purchase titles, which were in fact annexed to certain lands, and which no less than 4000 places or offices could confer, necessarily aided the *roturier* in a rivalry which the *gentilhomme* treated either with complaisant raillery or freezing disdain. And the sore affronts which the *roturier* received in this competition with the *gentilhomme* could not fail to engender all the bitterness of wounded self-esteem. How many an honest bourgeois, after having enjoyed a hearty laugh at the expense of Monsieur Jourdain or George Dandin, would, in graver moments of his own actual life, think with deep resentment upon the pitiable light in which the class thus satirized was regarded by the gay Dorantes and the gallant Clitandres! What! was the honest man, entertaining the natural ambition that his son should rise above the class in which he was born—was he to rear his son to more elevated spheres solely to make him a cully and a butt—ridiculous, when desiring to be accomplished—the cuckold and slave of a noble wife who did him the honour to stain his name and waste his fortune? It

* The supreme courts of justice were called parliaments, as the inferior were called seignorial. The officers of the supreme courts, or parliaments, actually became so *by purchase*, and were not removable even for malpractices! Hence the *noblesse* of the gown. It may easily be imagined how despotic, how tyrannical, and how corrupt, were such administrators of the laws. A man indeed bought the right to break you on the wheel,—and to take fees from your adversary for doing so!

was easy to say that the ambition was absurd and misplaced. But was it so in reality? What other openings from his own state were left to the man whom civilization had made too wealthy to remain contented with obscurity? Parliament did not exist. Even the bar had formed a nobility of its own. Posts at the court and distinctions in the army were only to be obtained by the noble. The son of a *bourgeois* might have the valour of a Bayard, but he must become a *gentilhomme* before he could be made a captain. By a law even so late as the reign of Louis XVI. four generations of nobility were necessary to qualify a man for the rank of a sub-lieutenant. If his hard-won gold could purchase an estate with a marquisate attached to it, was the citizen despicable because he desired to enjoy what he had bought and paid for? Was there, in short, to be an eternal wall of odious distinction between his own class and that which scattered upon him the mud of Paris from the wheels of carriages which were bearing the last louis of their owners to the brothel and the gaming-house? a class not respectable for virtues, not formidable from intellect, and whose members had exchanged the sharp sword of their ancestors for the weapon, less powerful and more irritating, of the polished sarcasm.

Thus insensibly all the habits of society co-operated with all the disparities of law, to hoard up against the day of reckoning a profound sentiment of hatred on the part of the moneyed and middle class against the higher.

Meanwhile the state of the rural population was precisely that which was to be expected. The peasantry were sold like cattle with the soil; even, in many parts of the kingdom, personal servitude was abolished but a few years before the Revolution. All hereditary ties of affection were not only weakened by the absence and exactions of their lords, but utterly annihilated by the frequent transfer of property,

according to marriages and sales. They had no education, but they had that gaiety and gregariousness of disposition which led them on every holiday to meet, to associate, and to pick up and to circulate in their vivacious talk many of the popular notions which the abuses of law and the works of thinkers began to scatter throughout the world. The gossip of a holiday was often to them what a news-room is to the mechanics of England. There is no education more dangerous and more superficial than that which is exclusively oral. It needs the liberty of the press to correct the influences which belong to the licence of talk.

We have said that one object of Richelieu was the formation of Absolute Monarchy, the other that of an Absolute Church. As regards the first,—in forming its strength, he prepared the causes of its downfall. The endurance of a monarchy, where the growth of society is not absolutely stopped, will always be found in proportion to its checks; for the checks compress, and adapt, and mould the monarchy from age to age, according to the altered wants and circumstances of the time. The annihilation of popular national assemblies, and of solid power in an aristocracy, left monarchy to all the excesses into which the impunity of power is sure to pass; hateful prerogatives, wasteful ostentation, disordered finances, and subsequent weakness, were the inevitable results. The great Cardinal was not more permanently fortunate in the maintenance of his Absolute Church. For while all may allow that in the checks to monarchy exist its strength, it has never been sufficiently noticed and insisted upon, especially by French historians, that as checks are to a monarchy, so dissent is to a church. The destruction of what the Cardinal called heresies and schisms left to the bulk of the population no option but Gallic Catholicism on the one hand, or absolute irreligion on the other. Now, in a country like England, which obtained from the

Wit of France the distinction "of enjoying a thousand sects, and one sauce,"—the Christian religion happily proffers shades in worship, form, and faith to all varieties of enthusiasm, passion, character, belief. If a man be revolted by any abuses in the church, real or supposed, in the same street lives the dissenter ready to convert him; hard at hand rises the chapel open to his prayers. If some tenet in one faith startle his conscience, another form of worship equally founded on scriptural authority and promise satisfies his scruples and presents a refuge from infidelity or indifference. And this copious and wise diversity of permitted opinion, while beneficial to Religion, is the best safeguard to the Establishment, inasmuch as the necessary effect of the competition is to preserve a certain wholesome vigilance in the heads of the church, an energy in education and learning, a care for general purity of life and morals,—while, though it may not obtain the reform of all abuses, it creates a public prepared to correct whatever may be obviously scandalous or oppressive. But in France, after the expulsion of the Huguenots, the unity of the church was so complete that the wide varieties of discontent had no practical opening but in the school of the scoffer and the sceptic. True that some Dissenters, chiefly Calvinists, still survived all persecution—for tyranny can never wholly extirpate opinion—but their number was too scanty, their zeal too suppressed, to have any influence on the masses. Sullen and dissatisfied, they were rather dangerous as politicians than useful as sectarians. We do not find them counteracting the Philosophers, but we find them, at the first explosion, rushing to the aid of the Revolution. Did the reason of one man oppose a doctrine, was the sense of another scandalized by the crime of a pastor, was the hearth of a peasant invaded by a libidinous monk, or the son of an honest trader corrupted by the example of a profligate *abbé*, not only the Church, but Religion itself, lost reverence

and affection. And no more earnest and decorous clergy were at hand to support the tottering faith, and rescue the reason from incredulity. Where dissent flourishes, a man often secedes from an established church to become more religious than before; where dissent is inactive and suppressed, his secession from the church is the retirement from religion itself. Here, an abuse drove the Episcopalian to Wesley; there, the Papist to Voltaire. And hence, as, in the absence of all check and all competition, abuses multiplied through every department of the church, so rapidly and generally the entire mass of the population were ripened for that fearful state of contempt for all Christianity which ended in the frantic Atheism of Clootz, or the frigid Deism of Robespierre. Nor, in making the church supreme, was it in the power of man to make all its priesthood of one mind. To disqualify dissent was not to prevent schism. Accordingly the scandalous disputes between Jesuit and Jansenist, while producing none of the good that arises from dissent, produced all the evil that comes from division. They opened a breach to contempt, but no vent to dissatisfied opinion. We are convinced that it was to the confirmation of the one absolute church in France that we may trace the principal cause of the irreligious spirit which desecrated the land under the Reign of Terror.

Thus then the very policy of Richelieu, in its completeness and vigour, followed up as it was, in either object, by Louis XIV., prepared the downfall of the two Institutions it had been devoted to establish. The agencies of civilization to which absolutism gives birth are always destined to destroy their parent. When Richelieu favoured commerce, and encouraged letters; when a middle class and a thinking class were permanently established — two powers were called into active life utterly incompatible with that suppression of opinion which is the essence of absolute power. And therefore, as M. Guizot well observes,

at the close of the reign of Louis XIV., monarchy was as decrepit as the monarch. The splendid progress of art and mind which characterized that noble reign, announced the anomaly which always ends in gigantic innovation,—viz., a restless population and a stationary government.

But to return to our view of the Anti-religious and Republican spirit that was abroad, the intellect of the time naturally directed itself against the abuses of the time. Religion having ceased to maintain its holy and reverent influences in France, having left little or nothing except the mere husk and shell of a corrupt church, at once detested and despised, the intellect of the age became material and sceptical: monarchy unchecked, and supporting its antiquated pretensions no longer by arms and treasure, but by the Lettre de Cachet and the Bastille, presented features which no one could defend, and which the intellect of the age attacked by the common consent of men. The masses were the last, perhaps, affected by these attacks. For amongst the intellectual, intellect must first find its audience. Accordingly in the educated (comprehending the highborn) classes, infidelity and liberalism found the earliest favour. The discontented courtier became naturally a believer in the *Contrat Social*; the unbeneficed *abbé* was naturally more familiar with the Encyclopedists than the Fathers. Nay, more than half the nobility were disaffected by the nature of their own position. For there was the most invidious distinction between the old noblesse and the new. To enjoy consideration it was not enough to be a marquis; the question was, "had your ancestor been a marquis 200 years ago?" Legally, the new noble shared the privileges of the old; socially and morally, he was still a *parvenu*; thrust from preferments and honours, mortified and galled by the contempt of the circle he had sought to enter, while obtaining the envy and the hatred of that which he had deserted. It was, in short, the

unhappy condition of the French government and constitution to engender and arm against them the two most irresistible foes, viz., the wealth of commerce, and the energy of intellect. For these very powers, which are ever struggling for distinction, were the very powers to which all legitimate avenues of ambition were beset with difficulty and humiliation. The doctrines, thus fostered and necessitated, gradually and imperceptibly descended from the higher and more learned to the lower and less educated classes: and from the saloons of the royal Orleans, and the learned Malesherbes, and the respectable Bailly, passed those sentiments which never become finally dangerous and destructive till incorporated with the interests and animated by the passions of the popular body.

It will often happen that the qualities of individuals, in an attacked and imperilled party, will stave off, nay, perhaps, counteract and defeat the dangers by which they are surrounded. But as the storm gradually gathered round the throne, with which every sinister interest, whether of aristocracy or of church, was connected, it became obvious that these qualities were not to be found in Louis XVI. His excellent heart, his sweet and amiable nature, were as wholly lost and thrown away in the turbulence of the time, as were the virtues somewhat similar of our own Henry the Sixth in the convulsions of a civil war. His domestic peculiarities—his innocent but mechanical tastes — his stolid heavy countenance smeared with the smoke of his forge—even his first frigidity, his subsequent uxoriousness, to his queen—were all matters that, repeated through the infinite gossip of Paris, covered his very name with ridicule. His amiability of disposition, too often yielding in the wrong place, provoked insolence and disheartened loyalty. His aversion from blood had, on imminent occasions, the worst effect of cowardice; and while the man had all the meekness of a saint, the system he represented exposed him to all the odium of a

tyrant. By a people contented with Reforms, such a king would have been adored. For Louis XVI. was by nature a Reformer—and happy had it been for France had her population possessed half the virtues of her king. But amongst a people less desirous to reform than eager to destroy, the safety of the ruler depends little on the qualities that beget affection, unless he has also those which inspire awe. Louis was never more insecure than in those periods of his reign when he was most popular. To add to his dangers, his queen, more brilliant and more prominent, had contrived to be the most detested person in the kingdom. Though possessing many fine qualities, they were as little suited to the times as those of her husband. A decorous gravity of life, coupled with mild firmness, might have won for her a respect which would have gone far to rally the middle classes around the throne; but her imprudent levity daily and hourly exposed her to the coarsest suspicions, and her sarcastic humour, coupled with passionate haughtiness, multiplied the number of her personal enemies amongst those who could best have defended her from slander. Ignorant of the people and of the times, she was perpetually grating against both. Now bullying a minister as with the power of a Catherine, now going incognita in a hackney-coach to a public masked ball as with the recklessness of a Messalina. Granting her to have been inviolably faithful to Louis, she contrived to hold him up to public scorn as a cuckold. Granting her to have been thoroughly attached to the people of her adoption, no belief was more common than that of her hatred to them as an alien. In stormy times, no matter what the great are, their fate depends upon what they are believed to be.

No popular revolution, according to Lord Bacon and to universal experience, was ever successful unless headed by the aristocracy; the victims lead the procession that conducts them to the knife. Royalty,

nobility, learning, and the clergy, appeared at the opening of the French Revolution as the leaders of the movement that had for its goal the bloody grave of all. Unquestionably that commencement of the DEATH MARCH, the first assembling of the *tiers-état*, presented much to dazzle the sight and awaken the hopes of the world. Whatever a mighty nation seemed to have best and noblest, all united in the cause of national reform, each party vying with the other in the surrender of unjust privilege and the study of the public good! And the most touching feature in the whole is the evident and enthusiastic sincerity, the gallant and fearless earnestness of each party of the entire public. It was a fever of patriotism,—yet, unhappily, out of this very fever, an acute observer might have perceived, would arise the ultimate delirium, the violence, and the frenzy.

It was, in reality, an assembly of people who knew nothing about business—setting themselves down to transact the most complicated affairs in a fit of drunken inspiration. There were not twenty practical men in the whole number. The habits of society had been for ages against all practical experience. In England, since the revolution of 1688, the Representative System has accustomed the minds of every class, and every party which it embraces, to the consideration of political affairs—to the weighing of means and ends—to distinct and intelligible objects. Even the wildest chartist amongst us has a thorough perception of the ends he desires to effect: he wishes a broad democracy, and he sees clearly that annual parliaments and universal suffrage are the most direct means to the consummation of that wish. But the French patriots, ardent to destroy, had no experience of state affairs whereby to reconstruct; their policy was a confused mass of heated theories, social dogmas, and political maxims, heaped chaotically together: "English constitution"—"Athenian republic;"—"Majesty of Roman vir-

tues"—"Primitive simplicity of savage state;"—"Austere morals"—"Rights of women;"—"Universal peace"—"France, the armed regenerator of Europe!" Out of these, and a myriad other incongruous medleys, rose the popular enthusiasm—what to end in but popular insanity? Experience affording no guide, religion no check, it was clear that all the strife of parties must merge in the sanguinary struggle of each for power; and that the predominant policy intended to create a government founded—so ran the jargon—"on Immutable Justice," would be but the adaptation of the shifts and expedients of the day to the passions of the populace. "There is but one step," roared Mirabeau from his stormy tribune, "from the Capitol to the Tarpeian Rock!" And on that step stood, from the taking of the Bastille till the fall of Robespierre, all the philosophers, legislators, philanthropists, dreamers; with the certainty that for him who lost the Capitol, there was no destiny but the Rock.

The two prominent figures in the early part of the revolution, Mirabeau and Lafayette, were the more suited to the exigencies of the moment inasmuch as they formed a link between the decaying state and the advancing; both noble by birth, and both with certain definite notions of a limit to destruction, they served to soften the shock of the transition. There was something aristocratic even in the Revolution, so long as the white steed and lofty plume of Lafayette were visible amid the riot, rolling back the carnage; or while the dominant genius of Mirabeau kept in awe the inferior spirits who represented the Mob the more faithfully from the absence of whatever was clear in the object, or rational in the pursuit.

The manners of the time underwent a change unparalleled in completeness and rapidity. A few years before, and even the Emperor of Austria shocked the nice etiquette of the court of France.

Now it was enough to wear a crown, to be considered below the common dignity of man. Even in the first fair show of the Revolution, the day following the death of the Dauphin, while his remains were yet laid in state, while the royal parents were in the first anguish of grief,—the deputies from the *tiers-état* burst (in spite of remonstrance carried into prayer) upon the presence of the unhappy king: "What!" sighed Louis, "is not one of these men a *father?*" Already the lovers of liberty began to manifest their patriotism by the brutality of their manners; the politest nation in Christendom hastened to obtain the character of the filthiest and most savage. The type of that freedom which consisted in the pleasure of outraging others may be found in the anecdote of Danton at the theatre. This abode of the once formal Graces of France had always afforded a fair representation of the character of the time, partly in the nature of the spectacle, partly in the habits of the audience. In the midst of schemes for the overthrow of a throne, the leading republicans could still find time for equal energy in the intrigues of the *Coulisses*. When the play of 'Charles IX.,' the dramatic libel on kings, was forced upon the King's Company, the Political Revolution had made a vast stride. When, in the midst of the pit, a huge burly man sat sullen, intercepting the view of his neighbours, and shocking the *bienséances* of polished life by wearing his hat nailed to his head—when the cry of displeasure arose, and that one man, clapping the hat firmer on his head, shouted forth in his deep roar, "C'est moi, Danton!"—and when the audience at once submitted to the sentiment that the one freeman had the right to annoy and insult all other freemen—the Social Revolution was gone far into the slough of the *Sans Culottes*.

And yet Danton himself was more genial, more even of the old French gentleman, than most of his compeers. His convivial qualities, his love of women,

his very vices tended in some degree to humanize his manners. The true personation of the mobs, of what the French call still *le Peuple*—(long may it be before that word can be justly translated into the noble Anglicism, THE PEOPLE!)—was Marat. Let us take M. Duval's description of *him*. Our narrator accepts an invitation to dine with Danton.

"*On dinait bien chez Danton*, one dined well with Danton. Politics were not always spoken; at his table one laughed often, and one was bored rarely. * * * * We passed from a very elegant saloon into a dining room looking upon the Cour du Commerce. At this moment there entered a man. A man—here is his portrait. He was at most from four feet eight to four feet nine (French measure), his head a little inclined to the left shoulder, like Alexander the Great; the limbs were crooked, the complexion yellow and bilious, the face marked with the small-pox, the lips thin, the eyes gray and rolling continually in their orbits, the eyelashes red, and the white, so called, of the eyes nearly the same colour, so that the pupil seemed to swim in blood. He moved his head restlessly to and fro, like a Greenland bear in his den at the *Jardin des Plantes*.

"As to the accoutrements of the *ami du peuple*, behold him from head to foot, a hat *à l'andromane*, as one then called those hats low in the crown, with broad brims turned up, adorned with a huge tri-colour cockade; an old coat worn out at the seams, striped stockings, red, white, and blue, and bits of string in his shoes in the place of ribbons or buckles; plush breeches, a red waistcoat, turned over, and the neck all open, lank black hair plastered to the temples, with a little *queue* fastened with a leathern knot.

"'Danton,' said Marat, 'from afar I have smelt the savour of your roast, and I have come to see if there is a corner for me at your feast.'

"'Why not, if we crowd each other a little? I am sorry you did not let me know, that I might have ordered something more.'

"'Pooh! your daily fare would suffice for me.'

"'Well, but when one invites oneself to dinner amongst persons *comme il faut*, one generally presents oneself clad a little less unceremoniously.'

"'Ah, with a laced frill, an embroidered coat, and one's hair curled *à l'oiseau royal*, eh! Thank you for nothing. Nature is at the cost of my toilet, and the friend of the *peuple* has no need of foreign ornaments.'

"'* * * * * But patriotism does not forbid a cravat or a collar.'

" 'I never wear them, as you well know.'

" 'But at least a clean shirt and clean hands.'

"I then perceived that Marat had, in fact, his hands as black as a smith's on a Saturday night, and his shirt of the same hue as his hands. May it be said without offence to his memory," &c.

Yes, this was Marat!—And in him appeared the friend of the populace (*peuple*), because the true son of the populace. This rickety, bilious, scrofulous, diseased victim of the neglect, the ailments, and the vices of his parents, represented in himself the squalid masses who formed the procession of Jourdain Coup-tête, or filled the gloomy pandemonium of the Jacobin Club. But beneath all this external debasement moved the iron springs of an indomitable, dogged, frantic energy; a spirit of blood and vengeance which made a virtue of crime, so honest was it, so sincere. Marat shrieking day after day for 300,000 heads—Marat emerging from cave and garret into a power that shook alike court and temple—the Arch Alecto starting from the rags and decrepitude in which the fury had been a while concealed—Marat was as willing to be the martyr as the hangman: those filthy hands would have spurned the gold that sullied the ruffles of the corrupt Danton. Nothing could soften, nothing humanize, but nothing could intimidate, nothing bribe. For a time Marat was the *peuple* and the *peuple* Marat.

Against such a spirit that now pervaded the great masses, what were all attempts at moderation and compromise? In vain has curiosity speculated upon what might have been the results, had Mirabeau lived and struggled for the preservation of the monarchy. Monarchy had no materials for preservation left to it. The weakness of the nobles as an order had become so manifest from the first, so thoroughly rotted away from amongst them was the spirit whether of cavalier or of patriot, that they had neither the courage to defend themselves, nor the ambition to save

their country. As the ancient warrior, who, having lost his shield, felt spirit and valour gone, and took to his heels at once, so, as soon as the nobles lost that mere appanage of power, their titles, they began to entertain no higher aspirations than those of physical safety. The first wind that shook the trunk scattered the leaves. The ignoble prematurity of their emigration was the basest feature in the whole revolution, and the surest sign that the noblesse as a body had lost even the elements for the restoration of aristocracy. What then could Mirabeau have done for a throne surrounded by democratic institutions, for a head destined to be crowned by the *bonnet rouge?* What man can protect, amidst the war of public passions, that which public respect and public opinion have deserted?

It was easy, we say, to see that where power had grown the monopoly of the assailants, there was no longer the hope of compromise with the assailed. That time passed when the moderate men incurred the guilt of cheering the populace on to the siege of the Bastille and the murder of its defenders. At a later period the Girondins vainly sought to be the restorers of reason;—vainly sought, in the midst of the frenzy they had encouraged, to weigh out drachms and scruples for the adjustment of scales into which a heavier sword than that of Brennus was already thrown. The Girondins may be considered the representatives of the Middle Classes. Their leaders belonged principally to that order—they had its respectability, its honesty, its prejudices, and its fears. The Girondin mayor of Paris, Péthion, riding amidst the riots, and weeping virtuous tears (he was *le vertueux Péthion*), because, after having murdered their victim, the populace quietly withdrew at his paternal remonstrances—the orators, Vergniaud and Isnard, opposing conspiracies by sentences—Barbaroux and the fair Roland imagining a government of federalisms, that in fact would have divided France into

small republics, under the control of the *bourgeoisie* and the lawyers—were equally the types of a class trained to respect for law, but thoroughly impotent at a time when law needs other force than its own. In such a crisis, an active Aristocracy has its defence in armed retainers—a Democracy in mobs—a Middle Class has nothing but an exhorting mayor and a decorous orator!

We have said that the Girondins were the representatives of the Middle Class:—so far their position has been recognised. But here follows a truth of mighty importance which we do not remember to have seen sufficiently noticed: So long as they kept apart from the multitude they were safe and respected; when they called in the multitude to their aid they rapidly became insecure and despised. We do not mean by keeping apart from the multitude that they neglected the legitimate means of popularity,—on the contrary, they were eminently popular until they connived at the popular excesses,—we mean simply their avoidance of using the multitude as an instrument to obtain power. In their first position, as men desiring reform, not violence, they carried the election of Péthion against Lafayette as mayor of Paris—they drove out the less liberal administration—they forced their own government, under Roland, Dumouriez, and Clavière, upon the king. The unhappy suspicions of Louis, and the intrigues of Dumouriez, who deserted his party, led to the dissolution of their ministry. They retired "with the regrets of the nation," according to the declaration of the Assembly. Their position as yet was strong and noble; with patience and moderation their return to power was sure. But they formed the resolution of defeated placemen—they began to excite the populace against the throne:—not that they wished as yet France to be a republic—no, but that French monarchy might be their appanage and patent. They became traitors to law by their palterings with force—palterings, for

they still affected attachment only to constitutional measures. They would trust to the petitions of the people; nothing more legitimate!—but they suffered the petitioners to present themselves *armed* before the National Assembly; nothing more fatal!—the speeches of Vergniaud while insidious became inflammatory: he would not call Louis a tyrant, but he *supposed a case* in which every one would call Louis traitor and tyrant both. Brissot, more bold, exclaimed that "one man paralyzed France!"—and that man her king. And all the while they set the populace on fire, they seemed to have little other design in the conflagration than the roasting of their own eggs. Their ambition prevailed—a second and a more fatal time they came into power; no longer as ministers of a king, but as delegates of a mob; no longer merely as representatives of the middle class, but as destroyers of the class above, and as mouthpieces of the class below. The date of this second rule of the Girondins commences from the celebrated 10th of August, the day of the invasion and massacre of the Tuileries. M. Duval, who was a witness and actor, describes this scene with great effect and truth.

"Péthion, the mayor, had been at the chateau at midnight, and had assured the king that the menaced insurrection should be pacified. Scarcely had the king repeated this assurance to the guard, than the sound of the tocsin, the roll of the drum, were heard. Instantly the great gate toward the Carrousel is closed. 'To your posts!' is the cry. They make us take our arms—then lay them down to pile them *en faisceau*. The greatest confusion reigns in all the courts—everywhere we hear the cannoniers of the guard venting imprecations on the king and queen, and declaring they will rather point their pieces against the chateau than against the *people*. A little before five in the morning Rœderer comes to us, and says, 'Gentlemen, a troop of misled citizens *menace* this *house* and its inhabitants; if they resort to violence it is your duty to repel force by force. Here is the law, I will read it to you:' and he takes a little book, *bound in tri-colour paper*, reads us the law, puts up the little book again, and is off. A quarter of an hour after the king visits our posts—in a violet-coloured coat, his hat under his arm, his sword at his side—he passes before our ranks, and addresses

us *d'une voix altérée*: 'Well, they come; I don't know what they want, but my cause is that of good citizens; we will show a good front, eh? (*nous ferons bonne contenance, n'est pas?*') and in thus speaking to us he had the tears in his eyes, and his air and carriage were such as to take all courage from the intrepid. The queen also said a few words, scarcely articulate, struggling in vain to suppress her sobs. In this moment arrived the two hundred *gentilhommes*, who had kept in that part of the Louvre which now forms the museum. The queen presented them to us: 'Messieurs, these are our friends; they will take orders, *and show you how to die for your king*.' As if there were not enough of ill-seasoned imprudence in these words, a rumour was spread that the queen had said, 'They will *give*—not *take*—orders.' This was a falsehood, but it sufficed as a pretext for the disaffected, and instantly two battalions of the national guard, who had just arrived, broke rank, and marched off to take position on the Carrousel with two cannon. There they stopped the fresh battalions arriving to the succour of the chateau, and forced them to take part in their revolt. From that moment expired all hope in the National Guard.

"Such was the sad and first effect of the apparition of these two hundred *gentilhommes*. Most of them very aged, they seemed scarcely to bear the weight of the sword, which was their only weapon. Like the unhappy Louis they had only snatched a few moments of repose upon benches and sofas, and their hair, like his, was in disorder. Nearly all in embroidered coats, satin waistcoats, and white silk stockings, a few only in uniform, their faces pale and haggard, they rather resembled men for whom sleep was necessary than champions for their imperilled king. God forbid that I should ridicule fidelity and devotion, but the truth is that their costume, so little appropriate to the occasion, their pretensions of exclusive loyalty, made them regarded with so unfavourable an eye that their succour brought less utility than danger. And it was not with this handful of aged gentlemen, however honourable and loyal, that Pergamus could be saved—

'Non tali auxilio, non defensoribus istis.'

"To complete all, one of these personages thought fit in a swaggering tone to say to the National Guard, 'Now, Messieurs of the National Guard, now is the moment to display courage.'—'We shall not fail in *that*,' cried an officer in an extreme rage, 'but it is not by your side that we shall give the proof of it.' And instantly he went off, and carried with him his company to join the cannon already pointed against the chateau."

And yet, alas! "this handful of gentlemen" in satin vests, and court swords, and silk stockings, were

all the last relics of that gallant chivalry who had rushed against the lion of England to the cry of Mountjoie St. Denis, who had followed St. Louis to the Holy Land, who had tracked through the battle-field the white plume of Henri of Navarre, who had shaken the throne under Louis XIII., who had met the charge of Marlborough at Ramilies and Blenheim, who had filled with lance and banner that very space of the Carrousel when it first received its name from the latest tournament held in France in the gorgeous youth of the fourteenth Louis! There now were the ashes and tinder of that aristocracy! What could a thousand Mirabeaus do to restore the departed glory; and what, without a nobility, amidst such a national guard, with such a mayoralty, invaded by such a populace, what hope for such a king! The rest is well known—Louis surrendered himself to the Assembly. This was the last day of nobility and royalty, the first of the unhallowed union between the middle class and the populace—the Dantonists who had led the movement, and the Girondins who had intrigued for it. In the midst of the paeans of the Marseillaise, and the shrieks of massacre, arose the dynasty of Vergniaud and the Talkers!

Truly says M. Duval (vol. iii. p. 242)—

"Scarcely had the sceptre, so long coveted, devolved on them, than their feebleness and hesitation made their dethronement certain. The massacres of September take place under their eyes; they are silent, or but falter out a feeble voice. From the installation of the Convention, the reins of government float in their hands, and they remain impotent witnesses of the crimes of the commune, the Jacobins, the popular societies! Members of all the committees, possessing majorities in every commission, they know neither to foresee nor to prevent. If sometimes they were roused into a sudden energy, it passed like a lightning, it vanished like a smoke. Gladly in a critical moment would they have adopted some vigorous measure, but it was enough to induce them to relinquish it, if the Commune appeared angry, or the roar of Danton was heard from the tribune. These were not the statesmen to intimidate the hardy conspirators with whom they had to contend."

Such are the hackneyed complaints against this ill-fated party: and yet it is rather just to blame the Girondins for the truckling to the masses by which they obtained power, than for the feebleness displayed when they had won it. In the latter instance the want of vigour was the proof of virtue. The principles most dear to them forbade the energy which was inherent in the Democracy of the Mountain. They were still the Representatives of what little was left of order, of law, of decorum, of education, of the MIDDLE CLASS in short:—their virtues forbade the vigour of butchers and assassins. And without a ruthless execution of criminals, in whom the public saw only patriots, they could not have punished crime. In a revolution, reasonable men must always appear to want vigour. He who shares the passions of the mob, ever seems most in earnest. But the school of Vergniaud and Isnard was one to make instruments of a populace, and to despise the very instruments it used. These sages of the closet had no more sympathy with the mob than Faustus with the fiend he had invoked. Already the Cordeliers and Jacobins, Danton and Robespierre, were combined for the destruction of the Girondins. Danton, aware of the sinister and jealous hatred even at this time conceived against him by Robespierre, indeed hesitated; but his indecision was brief. He saw the impossibility of allying the unscrupulous principle on which rested his power, his popularity, his safety, with the scholastic formulæ of the Girondins. "No," he said justly, "the moderates will not trust me, and I should lose myself in confiding in them." And from that moment, uniting with his serpent foe, Maximilien the Incorruptible, he planned the ruin of the Girondins,—and went blindfold to his own grave.

It was on seeing the dangers that surrounded them, on feeling that the sole power of the state was rapidly passing into the hands of the mob of Paris, that the Girondins began seriously to put into prac-

tice a theory that they had long before discussed and approved in the saloons of Madame Roland. With more of that statesmanship which belongs to thought, if less of that which develops itself in action, than the rival parties, they had the intelligence to foresee that France was too vast a territory for prolonged duration to one single republic. A sound and effective central government is not, at least in ancient states, compatible with a turbulent democracy, extending over an immense area. But if France could be divided into districts, each district a republic—if out of the provinces of the defunct monarchy a republican federacy could be formed—each state thus constituted could obtain submission for the laws it enacted. The power in each, now that aristocracy was extinguished, must gradually and quietly settle in the middle classes—the mob of Paris would cease to command the destinies of the nation—one republic would counterbalance the other. No scheme could be better for the restraint of pure democracy, none better suited to the domination of the middle classes. These views were powerfully cherished and enforced by certain Protestants of the party, who probably foresaw the establishment of their faith in some of the departments over which they might preside. Gradually the principal leaders of the party were brought to the same policy; and preparations were being made to effect it, when the Girondins fell: this very policy being a main cause of their ruin, inasmuch as they forgot one reason against ever having entertained it—namely, that it was impracticable; impracticable because unpopular; for in a popular revolution, what that is unpopular can succeed! *

No sooner did Robespierre publicly arraign and denounce this "phantom of federacy," than the whole

* Many historians have, it is true, disputed the justice of this charge against the Girondins, and have considered their scheme for Federacy to be indeed a Phantom.—M. Duval gives very curious and minute details on the *reality* of their project, and it is entirely conformable to the character and objects of their party.

populace became furious against the insult of being parcelled out and frittered away. And with justice, not only as a populace, but as a people. At that moment, surrounded by the armed powers of Europe, had the integrity of France been once lost—had the national spirit been exchanged for the departmental—had the legions of Christendom found, instead of a mighty community animated by one passion, a nest of little republics squabbling with each other, and settling the affairs of their several municipalities—the independence of France had been gone for ever. And the sense of this it was, that gave value and zeal to that bloody phrase now originated as a battle-cry by Robespierre: "*La République Une et Indivisible!*"

Much must be excused in the Girondins. If much to be blamed, for much also they are to be admired, for much pitied; but their fall was necessary to the nation. Girondism would have rotted the nation itself away.

With them passed the dynasty of the Middle Class, and rose that of the Mob—the true Reign of Terror. The tone of manners became still more gross and revolting. The words "Fraternity or Death," written upon all the prisons, gave the exact idea of the ferocious philanthropy which then denounced as an aristocrat any one who used the pronoun *you* instead of *thou*. Then Atheism, the rankest and most intolerable, grew at once the safest and the most fashionable, creed. Whatever was most ignorant, most absurd, most brutal in human folly, ascended into despotism:—Naturally;—for it was the most ignorant and the most passionate class, in a moment of general frenzy, that ruled all France. But force and passion are never enthroned utterly in vain. Amidst all the crimes of the period, one virtue of immense importance when acting upon large communities was unquestionable—Patriotism. The principle of nationality endangered by the Girondins blazed up with increased

fire and indomitable vigour. The foreign enemy was on the frontiers; and the same spirit that rendered life intolerable to the peaceful civilian, made the fierce soldier irresistible. The new leaders of the state, that is, the chiefs of the Mountain, who had supplanted the Girondins, carried into full action not only the vices, but equally this one virtue of the Mob. It is literally startling to see the sudden and brilliant contrast which their energetic policy presented to the vacillation of their predecessors. These butchers, so atrocious in the capital, were magnificent as statesmen and heroes the moment their minds flew to the borders, of invaded France. There, the iron will of Robespierre, the savage genius of St. Just, the reckless daring of Danton, changed at once from vices into virtues.

We hear it often said that the French republic would not have been so disastrous a failure in the experiments of liberty, had it not been for the frenzy produced by the invasion of the allies. On the contrary, to that invasion alone France owed its re-entrance into civilization. Left to waste all the strength of the new passions upon internal contests, to proscriptions would have succeeded civil war; and the wild democracy of old Corcyra would have been a heaven to the Pandemonium of a society for the evil spirit of which there would have been no vent. The superior sagacity of Mr. Pitt was never more displayed than in his reluctance to enter into the war forced on him at last; a reluctance for which the Royalists never forgave him. From wrong into right —from the hell of Paris into the daylight of truth and liberty—broke the youth of France in the just and holy cause of independence and self-defence. From the bosom of the Mountain, fourteen armies poured the spirit that never fails to conquer against the lukewarm hirelings of invading sovereigns. From the fires of the Mountain flashed the enthusiastic heroism of Jourdan, Hoche, Pichegru, and Moreau. Liberty

common to all—promotion the right of each—every soldier was a hero: no matter the rawness of the recruits, the inexperience of the generals,—it was as the strife of the young man against the old, of vigour against decrepitude, when a whole population, drunk with liberty, marched against the time-worn sovereignties of the sober world. Well may M. Duval exclaim—

"Oh, if the Convention could be considered only in the light of defenders from the foreigner, how noble its part in history!"

Meanwhile at Paris three great factions were struggling for power. The impracticable enthusiasts of brotherhood and atheism under Clootz, Chaumette, and Hébert; the Cordeliers, under Danton and Desmoulins; the Jacobins, under Robespierre. The time for the first was gone by. No sooner had the vigorous measures of the Mountain arrayed the ardour of France against the whole of Europe, than poor Baron Clootz's declamations upon Universal Love, upon the superiority of Philanthropy to Patriotism, were not only impertinent but treasonable. These men (the Atheist-Philanthropists) had nothing in their minds or their policy that could command more than momentary success; they appear for the most part to have honestly believed the articles of their execrable creed, but their very fanaticism was the proof of their inability to govern. They were to the more practical and robust demagoguy, whether of Robespierre or Danton, what the Socialists of our day are to the Chartists. Most of them desired the entire abolition of private property, "*La richesse nuit à la santé et conduit rarement à la vertu.*" The tribunes might applaud these sentiments, but how were they to be practised? Such doctrines preluded the Procession (under the management of Chaumette) of the Goddess of Reason. Was it possible that a faction, declaring the sole Deity of the Universe was an abstract word, represented by

an immodest harlot, could exist long in any community however besotted? The most striking feature in that farce was the man ordained to convert it into a great and awful tragedy,—Maximilien Robespierre. He, the formal, the moral, the precise; he, the educated, thoughtful cynic; with what hate and scorn must he have regarded such a spectacle of human folly! M. Duval describes him graphically.

"Among the numerous deputies, resting in disdain on their curule chairs, I will cite Robespierre. He took off, replaced his spectacles, wiping the glasses, beat a tattoo with his feet, shrugged his shoulders, yawned, took notes, and from time to time whispered to St. Just seated by his side. I have not seen the notes that passed between them, but I am free to think that they furnished the exordium of the famous report on the faction of Atheists which St. Just recited four months later at the tribune, and which served as a footstool for Chaumette to ascend the scaffold."

A faction so characterized was but the representative of the ignorance and folly of the mob; it could obviously not secure its interests nor wield its passions; it had not one element of duration, one quality for the acquisition of solid power. And every observer must have seen that the real strife for the mastery of France lay between Robespierre and Danton. Of these two men, amongst most historians, especially in England, Danton is the favourite. There is indeed, to a vulgar gaze, something almost captivating in this Mirabeau of the Mob, despite his horrible excesses. He was free from all personal vindictiveness, he was not naturally cruel; he spilt blood in torrents, but always for a purpose and from policy; he could not be sanguinary in detail; he had no cowardice in him, no envy. About his character was a large rough good-nature; he was affectionate and loyal to those he loved (for he did love and he was loved, this master butcher who could order the massacre of 2000 prisoners in cold blood). He

had no religion, even of atheism; for atheism is not, like scepticism, lukewarm and hesitating, but is ardent and intolerant in its creed; he laughed at the Goddess of Reason: he had therefore no vestige of hypocrisy or cant. Frankly he confessed his total infidelity, candidly he owned his theories of Revolutions, "things not made with rose-water," in which (as he said) "the boldest scoundrel was the most successful actor." He was profligate, lustful, and corrupt in money matters, but he was all these so undisguisedly, that the vulgar, who like a frank villain, ranked them amongst his merits. On the other hand, Robespierre was physically timid, and hence arose, perhaps, all his crimes. He, too, certainly was not by nature cruel, nor even vindictive, whatever has been said to the contrary; for it is a fact that he took no notice of many of his early personal enemies when their lives were in his power; but he never spared one man who could be an obstacle to his ambition, or who could endanger his safety. He, like Danton, was sanguinary only on a system, but his system was one of private fear as well as public interest. He was essentially an egotist. Danton lived for the circle, not from faith in its interests, but from his joyous temper; Robespierre sat wrapped in himself. The same cause that made Maximilien cruel, made him treacherous; for personal cowardice, combined with moral energy (which last Robespierre possessed to the highest possible degree), works through craft that which the bolder villany achieves through violence.

But then Robespierre had faith in something, and Danton in nothing. Robespierre believed in Liberty, in Virtue, in a Deity, in the People, in the Revolution itself. Danton regarded all with the same careless and hardy *insouciance*. With him Virtue was a convention, a Deity a word; the People, Liberty, and Revolution,—all pretencesfor ambition,—counters in the game of knaves. He got wearied of the Reign

of Terror, partly because he saw it made subservient to the personal egotism of Robespierre, partly because he was a man who lived for the day, and he was newly married, had amassed a fortune, and was fond of his villa.* But he wanted that earnestness and faith of purpose which could alone have enabled him to carry on the movement into order and mercy. He toyed with the time; he was wholly incapable to construct, while so marvellously fitted to destroy. With all his talents, which, though of a coarse quality, were considerable, he was a child when compared to the concentrated will, and indefatigable industry, and patient intellect of Robespierre.† And therefore, in looking calmly and dispassionately at the two men, the profound observer must feel, that if, placed in those times, he had been constrained to take his choice between Robespierre and Danton, had been forced to rest his last hopes of the Revolution, of Humanity, of Civilized Institutions, upon one or the other, Danton would not have been his election. The more, amidst that chaos of motives and of actors, we regard the prominent individuals, the more we must perceive that the only INTELLIGENCE of the time was Maximilien Robespierre. He had objects and purposes beyond the hour; he was ever looking forward to the time when the Reign of Blood was to cease; he only desired to destroy his enemies in order to call into being the new state of things in which he could reduce to system the theories he cherished. He was

* "They say," observed a patriot to Danton, "that your zeal is abated now you are rich; that you toiled to advance the Revolution till it had made your fortune; that now your fortune is made you would arrest it. This is not said of Robespierre, always poor and always zealous. Why is this?" "Because," answered Danton, without denying the charge, "I love gold, and Robespierre only blood."

† Danton felt this even while affecting to call Robespierre *luche*, and pretending to despise him. Latterly he shrunk from all contest with him, all association with Robespierre's foes, and could not defend from Maximilien's grasp even his own friends. It is noticeable that, throughout the Revolution, Robespierre was the only man who could protect his creatures. No one but himself could dare to lay hands on those he appeared to favour. This was an immense advantage over all his rivals.

engaged with David on designs for benevolent institutions a few days before he perished; he was drawing up notes for a code of laws in which his earliest dream of the abolition of capital punishments might be realized, while struggling foot to foot with Barras and Tallien for his head or their own. He firmly believed in all the principles he professed;—a hypocrite in his conduct to men, but an enthusiast in his faith in dogmas.

In times of convulsion two qualities are necessary, forethought to design, courage to act. Only one man in modern revolutions ever perhaps united these in the perfection necessary to complete personal success, and that man was Cromwell.* In the French Revolution Danton had more of the last, Robespierre incalculably more of the first. Historians compare Danton to a lion, and in all his qualities, noble or savage, he had much of the brute—soul in him seemed extinct. Robespierre, with all his atrocities, still had the calculation, reason, and belief of a Man. And the Man beat the Lion.

But when Danton fell, Robespierre, to survive, had no option but the choice of Augustus after the proscriptions. If the excitement arising from terror was to be prolonged, what could feed it after the death of Danton—except his own? He might have made the tragedy end with that signal catastrophe; but if the interest was to go on, if another act was to be added, all that could engage the audience was the fall of Maximilien Robespierre.

We have seen, that, as the Revolution advanced step after step, it preyed upon class after class, which it dragged up into power. As Vergniaud eloquently said, "Like Saturn, it devoured its own children." The head of Louis was destined from the moment the crowd shouted to behold it encircled with the *bonnet rouge;* the nobility were predestined the moment they merged themselves with the commons; the

* Another such man has risen since this was written.

middle class were invaded, pillaged, decimated, as soon as their dynasty fell with the Girondins. And now that the empire of the populace was founded, the populace began to find the fiend they had raised fixing its fangs and talons on themselves. Sated with the blood of nobles, priests, and scholars, the Guillotine had begun to reek with the gore of carpenters, shoemakers, masons, cobblers; and the eyes of the Populace opened when they saw *themselves* the prey of their own ferocity. The shops were shut up as the tumbrils passed to the scaffold—Paris was sickened of the Reign of Blood.

Amidst acclamations that came from a human hope, Robespierre had proclaimed the existence of a Deity; for men, believing or not in God, believed that, the worship of a God once established, something of mercy and goodwill to Man would mingle with the creed. In the presence of the FATHER, the son's hand would surely drop the blade lifted against the brother. But no; the Deity proclaimed by Robespierre had brought no mitigation of crime and slaughter amongst mankind. Like the gods of Epicurus, the Being a Robespierre could invoke seemed to disdain regard of the affairs of earth. And they who had wept hot tears to hear the eloquent periods in which this would-be Prophet, this Master of the Ceremonies to Heaven, introduced the new worship, began now to ask themselves whether indeed Maximilien Robespierre was the man to bestow Religion upon the world. Egotist in everything, it might be said that Robespierre sought to turn even the Almighty to his own advantage. He had invoked Heaven to crush the atheists as political enemies, not to curb atheism as a moral evil.

At this time Robespierre was a spectacle of absorbing and awful interest. His constitution, always sickly, was sinking fast under his vigilance and his terror. He seldom slept, he never reposed. Devoured by the acrid humours of his system, his face

became livid, his eyes streaked with blood. Hour after hour anonymous letters threatened him with the hand of the assassin—conspiracies gathered rapidly round him. Men, insignificant while Danton lived, took the strength of dragons from the blood of that awful head. Robespierre reigned but by his hold over the club of the Jacobins, and the hearts of the women! A strange subject for female enthusiasm! but *that* usually follows power and will. And there was something too of mystery in this cold, austere being—young in years, with the hoary cunning and hard heart of age; resisting all temptation, except that of governing mankind; and shaking Europe from a chamber over a cabinet-maker's shop.

The singular and ruthless determination of purpose which Robespierre had hitherto shown began to desert him. His energies, no longer concentrated upon the downfall of single rivals, wandered wild and indecisive over that vast field of enmity and peril which spread before his gaze. In proportion as he lost in vigour of action, he improved in eloquence of word. The common horror in which his character is held, makes us unjust to his talents. And it requires all the charity of abstract criticism to praise the orator while sickening at the man. But it would be difficult to find anywhere in the modern literature of the rostrum finer passages than some of his principal speeches contain. The address, delivered to the Convention, in vindication of the Deity, is full of beauties in language, and justice of thought. But it is natural that those who read should be so revolted at the want of harmony between the orator and the subject,—at the character of the butcher arrogating that of the theologian,—the Nero assuming the Numa,—that even the finest passages shock the moral taste too much to win justice from the intellectual. Robespierre vindicating, in the midst of massacre, the existence of a God of mercy, is like our own Richard III. issuing his Proclamation against Vice after the murder

of his nephews. The sentiments professed by either may be admirable in themselves, but they only serve to deepen the general abhorrence of the character they contrast. No man ever had so complete a command over an assembly from the mere force of mind and thought as Robespierre long enjoyed over the Convention, and to the last over the Jacobin Club. For, unlike most successful orators, he owed nothing to physical advantages: a wretched person, mean features, even the fire of the eyes concealed by glasses, a discordant voice, hoarse and indistinct in the low tones, shrill and grating in the higher, the words and the thoughts had nothing to set them off. It was this faculty of genuine eloquence, cultivated and improved till it triumphed over all physical defects, which hastened his ruin; for he was eminently a vain man, and like vain men he attached undue importance to means that obtained momentary applause. Yes! he would speak, he would denounce, he would prove, he would trust his cause to his eloquence! He thought of words at the moment when nothing could have saved him but deeds. And of all his efforts, never one equal in eloquence to his last speech at the Convention! Had it been delivered by a man whose history commanded admiration instead of loathing, it would have been cited as a masterpiece of lucid argument, subtle thought, and fiery and earnest passion;—for in words Robespierre had passion, and his cold dogmas ring out as living principles. But the spirit of the audience was gone, the speech was out of place and season. As a sermon from Dr. Chalmers on the hustings, as Milton's Defence of Unlicensed Printing in a council of war with the enemy at the gates,—was a long tirade of arguments or complaints in an assembly of men who knew that in six days France must be the executioner of Robespierre, or his slave. And the time lost in preparing the harangue, would have—But no, whether in words or deeds his hour was past:—the sense of humanity

was at length awakened, and the last Representative of the Populace fell amidst its hoots and curses to make way for the eternal successor of Civil Convulsion,—Military Rule. When Napoleon first pointed his cannon *against* the populace, the final moral was given to that tale of a world's shame and wonder: and the multitude prepared the crown for the man who delivered them from themselves!

In looking at this distance of time over the great Revolution of France,—even if we consent to make for its follies and its crimes all the excuses prescribed to us,—if we emancipate ourselves from the prejudices (so let them be called) with which human nature must regard its revolting incidents and details,—we must still find it a matter of grave astonishment, that so violent a convulsion should have produced such insignificant benefits. To those who read history with the eyes of Mignet and of Thiers (the great masters of the school so well entitled the *Fatalist*) history may interest, but it never warns —once grant that events are the things of destiny, and what signify the faults or virtues of the actors? This is indeed to reduce history to an almanack, nay, to an astrological almanack, and to place the horoscope of nations under the fabulous influence of the stars. But they who see, in the chronicles of a state, matter to make succeeding times profit by the disaster and emulate the triumph, must ever ask themselves that question, on the answer to which, so much to dethrone Law or to legalize Force must rest—"What has France gained by her Revolution?" And we think it might be satisfactorily shown, that whatever benefit France has derived from the Revolution itself is a wretched recompence for the crimes through which she waded to obtain it. Do not let us be misunderstood. We grant, at once, that if we compare the state of the people and the nature of the laws, in 1785, with their existence in 1842, there is in great and vital respects a consider-

able improvement; that improvement, however, is not to be ascribed to the Revolution, *but to the spirit that preceded the Revolution, and could have sufficed for all beneficial changes, without it.* Until, by the siege of the Bastille, the Populace were permitted to take the law into their own hands, there was no fear for the safe progress of Opinion; and the events of 1789–94 would have changed their character, and been known by the name, not of Revolution, but Reform. Popular principles had only to be temperate in order to be permanently successful. The king was prepared to yield; the state of the finances placed him and his hostile court at the irresistible command of the Assembly; the nobles, the church, and the men of letters, were, on the whole, pervaded by the spirit of the time. Nothing could have prevented the most lasting compromise of all interests, had, what is properly Revolution, namely, Illegal Violence, not usurped the place of Constitutional Improvement. At this period, the temper of the times, so far from being yet sanguinary, was for the extinction of capital punishment. We repeat and insist upon the truth that the Movement had only to abstain from violence in order to have carried reform to the highest point which the liberty and enlightenment of the Age could have desired: the moment that movement passed into revolution; the moment LAW, instead of being *corrected*, was *resisted;* the moment the populace were permitted to indulge passion and to taste blood; the moment, in fact, Force began,—Reform ceased. We concede all that the apologists for the excesses of the Revolution have demanded. We allow the unhappy influences of Marie Antoinette and the courtiers, the impolitic intrigues of the emigrants, and the unjustifiable aggression of the allies. But such are only the ordinary obstacles with which liberty has to contend in all stages of conflict and transition. And never, perhaps, had liberty advantages so great as those

which France possessed, and threw away; viz., a population of one mind, and a king whose heart was with his country. Desèze, in his defence of Louis XVI. before the Assembly, thus summed up, and not a voice could contradict:—"At the age of twenty, Louis, in ascending the throne, carried with him the example of moral excellence—of justice and economy. The people wished the abolition of an onerous impost—Louis destroyed it;—the abolition of servitude—Louis abolished it. The people asked reforms—he made them;—their rights—he restored them;—their liberty—he gave it. No one can deny to Louis the glory of having been in advance of the people by his sacrifices, and it is he whom they propose to——Citizens! I will not conclude the sentence—I pause before that History—which, remember, shall judge your judgment—and hers is the verdict that endures for centuries."

Yes, no candid man denied this praise to Louis, and what hopes would such a king have afforded to a People, wise to ask and patient to abide! What better chief has been gained for liberty—in Robespierre, in Napoleon, in Louis XVIII., in Charles X., in Louis-Philippe? Without a revolution, unless the mere assembling of the *Tiers-Etat* is so to be called, without, in short, violence and convulsion, France, under Louis XVI., and his noble son (tortured to death by the cobbler Simon), would have had a Representative Assembly on the broadest basis, a Government managed with the severest economy, a Press carried on by the freest regulations,—and more than all, the hearty sympathy and love of every land where Civilization can free the limbs or elevate the mind. Has she ever had them since?—has she got them now?

Unquestionably the abolition of privileges, the purification of the church, the amendment of the laws, have been great boons to France, but those were predestined from the first meeting of the *Tiers-Etat.*

For those, no massacres, no guillotine, no regicide, no reign of terror, no revolution (such as we mean by the revolution of France), were required. It was not for those *real* benefits to France that her streets were to swim with blood. The blood was lavished *after* those benefits were obtained.

Perhaps the two greatest evils of the Revolution were, first, that it created that habit of impatience which the best thinkers of France lament as the prevalent characteristic of their countrymen in this age—an impatience equally lamentable in public and individual existence. To succeed at once, or at once to destroy—such is the maxim that makes the assassin and the suicide. The second evil was the habit of indifference to moral character in public men, which could not but be engendered by a demagoguy succeeded by a soldiery. At this moment France has scarcely one guarantee, either for permanent government or liberal institutions.* The representative chamber is so confined that it never represents public opinion; and the electoral chamber, from its constitution, is tainted with the servility of courtiers, and has never that interest against despotism which belongs to aristocracy. Even the Press, to which the French have, from the instinct of weakness elsewhere, attached such affectionate importance, is so feebly guarded by harmonizing institutions, that, while in a popular crisis it can inflame passions better appeased, in ordinary times it is exposed to persecutions, the virulence and impunity of which are a scandal both to the people and the crown. If we compare the real safeguards for liberty, the real strata and foundations for good government possessed now by the French, *with those at their disposal in* 1789, far from having gained, they have incalculably lost. And at

* The reader will remember that this was written in the later years of Louis Philippe. It is beyond the limits of this essay to inquire whether constitutional liberty has obtained better safeguards since.

this moment no man can foresee whether, ten years hence, France may not again be a democracy without education, or a despotism under a conqueror.

A twofold moral then arises from the contemplation of the Reign of Terror; the moral to Rulers, and that to the People. A terrible warning is it to a Monarchy that does not in time partake its responsibility with constitutional assemblies; to a Government that does not regard laws as its right arm, finance as its left; to a Nobility that do not link themselves with the Commons, not suddenly and violently, but through all the slow and imperceptible links of social life; to a Priesthood that forgets the duties which command reverence and attract love. A lesson is it also to rulers no less in resistance than concession; to concede early what is just, but to resist to the last what is iniquitous. The horrors of the Revolution were owing as much to the latter cowardice of all who should have opposed, as to the early obstinacy of all who should have foreseen and forestalled it. A warning equally grave, and if possible more important, is it to the People, that one step gained by law leads to practical and enduring liberty far sooner than a thousand steps gained by force; that excesses in the power they attack never justify excesses in the power they would establish; that revenge is not only as criminal in a people as an individual, but that it is as impolitic and foolish. The greatest errors, and those most fatal to our happiness, which we as private men commit in life, are those which we commit through vindictive passions. We acknowledge this truth as persons, let us enforce it as a people. Above all, perhaps, this revolution teaches communities that to institutions alone liberty can be confided, and that institutions to be permanent must not too materially differ from the ancient habits that innovators seek to reform. The indifference to institutions is still a characteristic of our neighbours. Gallant to overthrow, unsteady to construct, the

error of their first Revolution pervaded their last; and after a movement almost unparalleled for energy and humanity (for such must the events of the Three Days ever be considered), they were contented with a dynasty and a parchment charter, without one single institution to render the objects for which they fought the heritage of their children. They have obtained a dexterous and an able king; they have won neither reform for their Laws, representation for their Chamber, nor liberty for their Press.

# GOLDSMITH.

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# GOLDSMITH.

[*The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith. A Biography, in Four Books.* By JOHN FORSTER, of the Inner Temple, Author of the *Lives of Statesmen of the Commonwealth.* Bradbury and Evans.]

ONCE upon a time, in the pretty village of Lissoy, in the county of Westmeath, barony of Kilkenny West, a young woman, afterwards known as Elizabeth Delap, put into the hands of a little boy, "impenetrably stupid," his first book. 'Labour dire it was and weary woe' to that little boy; but not seemingly an event of much importance to the literary world. The signposts to Knowledge are not, however, like those set up before the gates at Versailles, inscribed with laconic magniloquence, "To Spain," "To Flanders." We creep into the high road, little knowing whither it will lead us,—and we have a natural curiosity to learn by what humble lanes and crossings our fellow-travellers first emerged into the great thoroughfare. The next glimpse of the small alumnus is caught through the cabin-smoke of the village school, kept by Thomas Byrne, a retired quartermaster of an Irish regiment. It is a glimpse, and no more, still of a little boy, with a manner for the most part uncommonly serious and reserved,—though when gay none more cheerful,—listening to his preceptor's stories, whether taken from the brisk adventures of a soldier's life, or the more bewitching stories of fairy legend; now and then making rhymes; now and then reading such polite aids to reflection as 'Moll Flanders' or 'Jack the Bachelor.' From this hazy twilight we perceive our little pilgrim emerging into somewhat clearer atmosphere,—presenting to us a heavy sickly face,

deeply marked with the small-pox, and placed upon the thick shoulders of 'a stupid blockhead,' at the "superior academy" of Mr. Griffin, of Elphin, in Roscommon. In due time, however, this unpromising specimen of Humanity put out to Knowledge, begins to evince tokens, erratic and uncouth, of the culture it has reluctantly received. Our little boy is now a lad,—still at school—though no longer at Mr. Griffin's,—at school at Edgeworthstown. He presumes to have likings and dislikings as to the different authors enforced on him. His schoolfellows remember that he was pleased much with Horace, more with Ovid, and that he hated Cicero, or at least did not highly esteem him. His character already assumes somewhat of definite shape. From out the crowd of boys, with their general attributes of coarse but healthful boyhood, stands distinct a peculiar idiosyncrasy. Our pock-marked, pale-faced, clumsy stripling is noticed as 'sensitive,' over-sensitive. He is quick to take offence, quicker still to forgive. He is at first shy and backward; but by degrees he is bold enough to be mischievous—and makes a figure at 'Fives.' He is no longer considered quite a blockhead,—nay, though indolent, he is thought not destitute of talent; but the master thinks more highly of him than the boys do. But school closes—College begins—the sensitive, ugly boy is an idle shambling student at the University of Dublin.

A piece of worldly luck which has befallen his family has proved to him a bitter affliction. He has a sister who has married above her station. His father has encumbered his means to provide for that sister such a dower as may satisfy his pride. And our over-sensitive youth must go as a sizar to the university at which his elder brother had won some distinction, nay, had obtained a scholarship, as a pensioner. A youth of vigorous judgment and resolute purpose,—one exulting in what Erasmus calls *basilicâ, athleticâ, pancraticâ valetudine*,—would have

only the more steadily exerted himself to rise superior to a meanness of circumstance, which could not forbid to industry its rewards, nor to genius its career. But our youth—though not the dunce he had seemed to his early teachers—is far from that being 'teres, atque rotundus,' from whose surface the shafts of fortune turn aside. That pride of his, so easily offended, is terribly in his way here. He is more sensitive of a condition he feels beneath him (though it would have been difficult to say why, since his father's means warranted no higher station, and his uncle had been a sizar before him) than eager to establish intellectual claims to respect. And to say truth, difficult would it have been for this lad, so imperfectly educated, to force his way into distinction purely academical. "The popular picture of him in these Dublin University days is little more than of a slow, hesitating, somewhat hollow voice, heard seldom and always to great disadvantage in the class-rooms; and of a low-sized, thick, robust, ungainly figure, lounging about the College courts, on the wait for misery and ill-luck." Hitherto his father has scraped means to supply the niggard wants of a sizar, not without reasonable hope that the son will exert himself, as his brother the pensioner had done before him, and obtain something like independence in the way of a scholarship. But now his father dies—and our lazy, lounging student lives as he can, by small gifts from his uncle, or petty loans from College friends—learning from the last that worst and surest lesson in the Art of Sinking—the practical bathos of human life—viz. to borrow without shame. Yet here, a certain energy, fitful and irregular, but energy still, breaks out; an energy that rivets our eyes to this comfortless picture, and interests us in this unequal battle between Poverty and Man. He does not, it is true, set himself resolutely to work to redeem lost time, and wrest subsistence, by patient labour, from the resources which the university offers to its students. But he

shuts himself up—he composes street ballads, he runs forth to sell them at the Rein-Deer Repository in Montrath Court, for five shillings a-piece. And now comes his reward—he steals out of the College to hear them sung!

With pathetic eloquence exclaims the last biographer, whom this stupid child and idle student has contrived to find, "Happy night — worth all the dreary days! Hidden by some dusky wall, or creeping within darkling shadows of the ill-lighted streets, watched and waited this poor neglected sizar for the only effort of his life which had not wholly failed! Few and dull, perhaps, the beggar's audience at first; more thronging, eager, and delighted when he shouted the newly-gotten ware. . . Gentle faces pleased, old men stopping by the way, young lads venturing a purchase with their last remaining farthing: why, here was a world in little with its fame at the sizar's feet. 'The greater world will be listening one day,' perhaps he muttered, as he turned with a lighter heart to his dull home." And this poor poet of the ballad-singers, this truant student with his morbid sensitiveness—and his pride, no less unhealthy perhaps in the false direction it had taken—still has something, which does not always accompany over-sensitiveness, and is very rarely found in company with false pride: He has ready sympathy for others. Those five shillings which his ballads have brought him will in all probability not reach home undiminished. That audience listening to his muse comprises many more destitute than himself, and pleasure and pity both unlock the poor poet's hand, and careless easy heart. "To one starving creature with five children he gave at one time the blankets off his bed, and crept into the bedding for shelter from the cold."

It is not to be denied by any one of right principle, that our youth would have been much better employed on the legitimate studies for which he was sent to college, even on the "cold logic of Burgers-

dicius, or the dreary subtleties of Smiglesius," than in writing street ballads sold at five shillings a-piece; that his generosity would have been better evinced in paying the loans he had borrowed; and that his sensitiveness would have been more praiseworthy, had it reminded him that he had no right to this looseness of sympathy, while he himself was dependent upon others. It is indubitably wrong, while abridging perhaps the decent wants of some generous benefactor, to indulge the luxury even of doing good. We cannot blame those who take the more rigid view of amiable weaknesses and charitable errors. But good or ill, we describe our student as we find him. And were we to set him up as a model, few we suspect would be his imitators. Thus, then, our very unexemplary sizar scrambles his way through college, making small progress in mathematics, but able, he himself boasts, "to turn an ode of Horace into English with any of them." And as this is the best he can say of his classical acquirements, so we must suppose them to be far from deep or extensive. He gets into various scrapes, the worst of which is, the aiding and abetting a memorable college riot; and this, or the serious admonition it entails, spurs him up into a laudable attempt at self-retrieval. He tries for a scholarship, and actually gets an exhibition. Seventeenth out of a fortunate nineteen! last but two on the list. This exhibition brings him in thirty shillings.

"Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero
Pulsanda tellus."

Seventeenth on the list, and thirty shillings in his pocket! it is too much for human nature—at least, for *that* human nature—to support with dignified equanimity! He gives a dance in his rooms,—

"Accipiter velut
Molles columbas,"

a cross tutor, who bears him no good will, pounces upon him and his guests. Caught in the act, the

punishment is condign; but considering that both the parties were Irish, and that the offence, in an English university, would have entailed rustication at the least, we are not inclined to be very severe on the exasperated tutor, who knocks down the sizar. Next day the sizar sells his books, leaves his college, lingers in Dublin till he arrives at his last shilling, and then sets off for Cork. His brother relieves him from famine, clothes him, takes him back to the Mater—who to that rude son scarcely deserves the epithet of Alma,—and patches up a hollow reconciliation between disciple and master. At last our sizar takes his bachelor's degree, lowest in the list. And now behold him a man! He is twenty-one! The law asserts that he is arrived at years of discretion. He resolves to prove that the law never more flagrantly indulged in its privileges of legal fiction. The charming biographer before us says, "this is the sunny time between two dismal periods of his life." Sunny, no doubt, it seemed by contrast to our emancipated sizar, for he often recalled it with a regret which we believe to be sincere. "If I go (he wrote in after years), if I go to the opera, where Signora Columba pours out all the mazes of melody, I sit and sigh for Lissoy's fireside, and 'Johnny Armstrong's last good Night,' from Peggy Golden!" But whatever sunshine he found here, little sunshine he brought to his mother's cottage. By fits and snatches he helps his respectable praiseworthy brother in the irksome drudgery of teacher at the village school; but more often we find him sauntering into the village inn: there, entering with him, we see the scapegrace in full glory, presiding over lesser scapegraces, as thoughtless as himself, at a kind of club, playing whist, singing songs, and parading the scraps and remnants of Latin he has brought home from that feast of learning where he sate last at the table. Now and then, in Protean varieties of idleness, we may see his clumsy careless figure bending over the

banks of the Inny, the rod in his hand, or the flute on his lips; or hunting otters in the Shannon; or throwing a sledge-hammer at the fair of Ballymahon. His friends entreat him to take orders. But this rude creature, so little favoured by the Graces, is not without a strange love of personal finery: the black coat revolts him; perhaps other and better reasons concur in making him set his face against the church. Later in life, he thought himself not good enough to read prayers in a private family. He may have thought himself not good enough to read them to a congregation and to enforce the lesson by example. Nevertheless,—for our vagrant is docile in his own way,—he yields to the wishes of his family; whether he reads for orders is not quite clear; but he certainly applies for ordination, and as certainly is rejected: some say because he is too young, others because he has been too wild at college; one worthy witness believes because he presented himself to the bishop in scarlet breeches! Again, new phases of this disorderly existence present themselves. We see our friend, whom nothing hitherto has sufficed to teach what at least we desire our sons to learn—in the capacity of a tutor. Poor pupil, what became of thee! Soon lost to that occupation, we greet him in setting out to Cork on a good horse with thirty pounds in his pocket, intent, it would seem, on the El Dorado of America, and returning home without a sixpence on a lean beast, to whom he has vouchsafed the name of Fiddleback, wondering "that his mother is not more rejoiced to see him!"

But what matters the insensible evaporation of thirty pounds, or the metamorphosis of plump horses into skeleton Fiddlebacks? Be it remembered that our hero has an uncle,—an uncle rarely seen, except in the old comedies,—an uncle precious, placable, inexhaustible. Into those pockets whence thirty pounds have just vanished, the uncle sinks fifty more, and sends off the nephew to study the law. Arrived in

Dublin, with that propitiatory offering to Themis, our youth thinks proper to pay his first respects to Fortune,—is allured into one of her temples, called by mortals a gaming-house, and the *Diva præsens* benignantly appropriates to herself the sacrifice designed for an austerer goddess. Our unfortunate adventurer this time has some natural compunction: it is long before he owns what has happened. He is then invited back to the country, forgiven (but that of course) by his uncle; stays a few months with his brother, with whom he unfortunately quarrels; and then his friends exert themselves once more to push him on in the world. The project of the law as a profession is however abandoned. It seems to be tacitly acknowledged, that a calling, which our social infirmities ordain for the protection of the pockets of others, is little suited to one who can take such poor care of his own. Failing Church and Law, what is left? Medicine. Again the uncle opens the elastic purse-strings, and, in 1752, our adventurer starts for Edinburgh, as a medical student. There he distinguishes himself highly—as a capital singer of Irish songs. He varies this occupation by some kind of employment (probably as tutor) at the Duke of Hamilton's, where "he is liked more as a jester than companion." His pride takes offence, and this employment, whatever it be, lasts little more than a fortnight. He visits the Highlands on a hired horse, "about the size of a ram, who walks away (trot he cannot), as pensive as his master." But if no promising student in medicine, those with whom this strange creature corresponded must have been aware that under all defects of character there was now clear and distinct proof of something to justify, both in the youth himself, and in his more indulgent friends, that "knack of hoping" which belonged to his own facile nature. In his letters there are signs of a humour original and exquisite;—evidences of an observation, not deep, perhaps, but keen; a command

of style, peculiar at once for chastened grace and for lively ease. The letters were worth paying for;—they generally *were* paid for. Meanwhile, the Law that our medical student had deserted, pursues him revengefully in the shapes of its wonted Eumenides—the bailiffs. With his usual goodnature he has been security for one friend, and, with his usual readiness of resource, he meets the penalties of the security by borrowing from others. Thus possessed of thirty-three pounds, he prudently leaves Edinburgh, and embarks for Bordeaux. Fortunately he goes on shore at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and is making very merry with seven men, when in march a sergeant and twelve grenadiers with their bayonets screwed, and arrest him as a Scotch Jacobite; his seven boon companions being Scotchmen in the French service. He remains a fortnight in prison, while the ship sails on without him, and sinks at the mouth of the Garonne. At last, *per varios casus*, our medical nomad arrives at Leyden.

Here, perhaps attending lectures, and certainly playing at cards, he remains nearly a year without an effort for a degree; he thinks it then time to leave the university, and for that purpose borrows, *more suo*, a small sum from a friend. Whatever the faults of our hero, we have seen that at least he was generous (borrowers mostly are so); he passes a florist's garden, and expends the greater part of the loan he has received in purchasing costly roots, which he sends to his uncle. Thus relieved of unphilosophical superfluities, he sets off from Leyden, one guinea in his pocket, one shirt on his back, and a flute in his hand; that flute—we beg pardon for so cursory and slighting a mention of that flute; what was our friend without it? That flute, dear mischief, had been his solace and perdition. Woe, and thrice woe to any man, constitutionally indolent, with his own way to make in this hard life, who takes to the flute! Slow will be his advance in the world with

his fingers on those fatal stops!—that flute, deadliest of all the friendships the sizar had made at college—at every new insult he had received from man, at every fresh disaster he had provoked from fortune—that flute had furnished inauspicious vent for 'blowing off,' what otherwise might have been salutary 'excitement.' It was as much as Ulysses could do, what with stopping the ears of his seamen and having himself lashed to the mast, to save his ship from the Sirens. But when one is not Ulysses, and when one carries a Siren always about with one in one's own pocket, shipwreck must be the habitual incident of life! With this flute he then sets off on a tour—the man who had tried in vain to be a scholar, a clergyman, a lawyer, and ought now to be hard at work in qualifying himself for a doctor! Travelling on foot, the flute (*fiat justitia*, for once not all perfidious) opens to him the hospitality of humble roofs. He sees the world to the sound of his own music.

Through Flanders, France, Switzerland, and parts of Italy, he pursues his wanderings, and boasts that "he examines mankind and sees both sides of the picture." So at last he fights (or rather flutes) his way towards England, and steps on shore at Dover. No more flute-playing now, poor vagrant!—No doors open here to that disreputable Siren. There is reason to suspect (thinks his last biographer) that, on the journey from Dover to London, he attempted a comic performance in a country barn; and at one of the towns he passed through (Heaven knows how, and curiosity would in vain guess where), he is said to have received from some homicidal university the physician's formal authority to slay—he yet implores to be hired assistant in an apothecary's shop.

In the middle of February behold him wandering, "without friend or acquaintance, without the knowledge or comfort of one kind face, in the lonely, terrible London streets."

Whether he picks up crumbs as an usher; whether

he lives among the beggars of Axe Lane; whether he spreads plaisters and pounds in mortars for an apothecary at the corner of Monument Yard; he contrives, however, to elude famine; and we see him at length physician in a humble way in Bankside, Southwark, feeling the pulse of a courteous and credulous patient, and, in spite of all entreaties to be relieved of his hat, hugging it tight over his breast to conceal a patch in the second-hand velvet.

Of all earthly means whereby man can live by the sweat of his brow, there was none which our friend so utterly detested, none for which he was so unfitted, as teaching the young idea how to shoot,—he whose own ideas had hitherto shot up all ways but the right one; yet this was precisely the lot which Fate in her malice had always hitherto insisted to obtrude upon him. He could never stretch out those loose, unretaining, awkward hands of his for bread, but what some sinister chance thrust into them the birch and the horn-book. And suddenly, from the unprofitable employment of feeling the pulses of patients who are more likely to be feed by him than to fee him, he is wrenched aside into that of assistant at the academy at Peckham. "May I die by an anodyne necklace," saith he (speaking out of his own heart though through the lips of another), "but I had rather be under-turnkey at Newgate!" With the most morbid desire that man ever had to be treated with respect, our poor friend sets to work to command it in a way peculiarly his own. "He plays all kinds of tricks on the servants and the boys (of which he had no lack of return in kind), tells entertaining stories, and amuses everybody with his flute." That accursed flute!

> "Illo venena colchica
> Et quicquid usquam concipitur nefas
> Tractavit, agro qui statuit *suo*
> Te, triste lignum!"—

But here at length that goal, which those

wandering, blundering, luckless feet were ordained to reach, appears, though still dim and distant. Dr. Milner, the principal of the Academy, is an occasional contributor to the 'Monthly Review.' Griffiths, the bookseller, parent of that periodical, dines with Dr. Milner, and meets the usher at the board. Talk turns upon the 'Monthly Review,' and its new rival the 'Critical,' set up by Archibald Hamilton, assisted by Smollett. Publishers have a peculiar instinct for discovering those who can help them. With scent more than canine, under beeches the unlikeliest to the common eye, they detect the hidden truffle. Something said by this thick-set, pale-faced usher, arrests the attention of Mr. Griffiths; he asks to be favoured with a few specimens of criticism. The specimens are sent and approved; the usher leaves Dr. Milner's, and binds himself to Mr. Griffiths for one year; to board and lodge with the bookseller, receive a small salary, and devote himself to the 'Monthly Review.' Here, then, this desultory, roving spirit—hitherto one foot on land and one on sea—settles at last. He has found out, as calling after calling has slipped from him, his true profession. Never more will he be indolent now—the gay holiday of life is over. He is to be an author. And so first emerges from all the disguises of unsteady, fickle, vagrant youth, the immortal effigies of OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

Thus far, we have done little more than avail ourselves of the striking pictures which Goldsmith's last biographer has placed before us: Pictures necessary to impress upon our recollection when we come to examine the peculiar characteristics of a writer whose popularity equals his renown. For, indeed, under all these distractions from the regular course of education, the education which made Oliver Goldsmith what he was, proceeded steadfast, uniform, and distinct. From the early stories and rhymes of Thomas Byrne, the soldier schoolmaster, to the wanderings, flute in hand, by the murmuring Loire,

Goldsmith was emphatically a writer from experience. What he had seen, what he had felt, that he reproduced. Comparatively with his other gifts, his imagination was not vivid nor comprehensive. Not of him could it be said that he "exhausted worlds and then imagined new." It is astonishing that an author who wrote so much, who skimmed over so vast a surface of reading, should have ventured so little, in his creations, beyond the pale of his personal observation. His favourite characters are notoriously variations of the same forms; most of them, indeed, are but likenesses of the author himself in different positions. Now he appears almost at full length in the Philosophic Vagabond (George Primrose) to tell his own adventures, to utter his own sentiments; now, in a character meant, one would think, to be wholly dissimilar to his own—that of Sir William Thornhill—all which is really natural and interesting, is the *silhouette* of Oliver Goldsmith. In the Mr. Burchell, who is presented to us as the strange gentleman "who had been two days in the inn and could not satisfy the hostess for his reckoning, though no later than yesterday he had given three guineas to the beadle to spare an old broken soldier that was to be whipped through the town for dog-stealing;" "who had carried benevolence to an excess when young; whom the slightest distress, whether real or fictitious, touched to the quick; who grew improvident as he grew poor; who travelled through Europe on foot; who still preserves the character of a humourist, and feels most pleasure in eccentric virtue; who was fondest of the company of children, and was famous for singing them ballads and telling them stories;"—in this Mr. Burchell who does not recognise at once the author? And, in proportion as in the other attributes of the character we lose sight of Goldsmith, the character itself becomes artificial and incongruous. Even in his plays, we find our author sitting to himself in Marlow, with a caricature of his

own youthful festivities as Tony Lumpkin at the head of the table in the alehouse. Honeywood, who calls his extravagance, 'generosity,' and his trusting everybody, 'universal benevolence,' is still more transparent. Again, in 'The Citizen of the World,' the Philosopher of China perpetually reminds us of the features of Goldsmith; and, as if that were not enough, he appears *in propriâ personâ* as the Gentleman in Black. By some extraordinary perversion of judgment, there are persons who still believe that Lord Byron depicts himself in his heroes. Though we concede that Lord Byron may, in his earlier poems, have depicted heroes whom he was willing the world should think like him,—yet if all we know of that great poet, out of his works, were cancelled and forgotten, there is not one of his creations by which we could form the remotest conjecture of what the Poet really was. But every impression of Goldsmith's mind is stamped with a likeness of himself. Where he depicts other characters, he is felicitous only when his experience is at home. His portrait of a profligate English gentleman in young Thornhill is but a disagreeable and odious caricature; it is the worst specimen of an Irish squireen dressed up as an English squire. But his 'Vicar of Wakefield,' and its counterpart the Village Preacher of Auburn, drawn from his kinsman (with sundry lively traits of himself in the first), are not more exquisite than truthful. Characters completed with a fainter genius, but still admirable, such as Lofty and Croaker, were precisely those which our poor poet's life must have thrown constantly across his way; and even in their mouths he puts sentiments all his own.

His conception of character was, in short, masterly beyond praise, wherever it was drawn from actual observation, not from creative invention. And it is precisely this which renders his satire so inimitably truthful in the most consummate, though the briefest, of all his works of character, the 'Retaliation.' Goldsmith

could never have written a Rape of the Lock; but, in his later days, he could have illustrated Horace with modern examples more life-like than Pope's. It is the same with ideas as characters;—Goldsmith's range was limited. Every one familiar with his writings knows how he loves to repeat the same thoughts, especially the same images, in almost the same expressions. Even in the 'History of Greece' the metaphor used in a 'Life of Parnell' is repeated; even a familiar letter to Mr. Hodgson is embellished with the polished ornaments of 'The Vicar of Wakefield.' Mr. Prior is right when he says, "No man seems to have written more immediately from himself, or to owe less obligation to classical sources." Indeed there is but one instance we can remember in Goldsmith of an imitation from another poet so direct, that, being unacknowledged, it amounts to plagiarism. This instance occurs in the famous lines which end the description of the Country Clergyman in the 'Deserted Village;' and as no one, we believe, has hitherto detected the source from which the noble simile in those lines is borrowed, we will annex to Goldsmith's imitation the original, which is to be found in a poem by the Abbé de Chaulieu:—

GOLDSMITH.

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

CHAULIEU.

"Tel qu'un rocher dont la tête,
Egalant le Mont Athos,
Voit à ses pieds la tempête
Troubler le calme des flots,
La mer autour bruit et gronde;
Malgré ses émotions,
Sur son front élevé règne une paix profonde."

Chaulieu was the poet most in fashion when Goldsmith travelled on the Continent, and his verses were quoted in all literary societies. But as he only

allowed them to circulate in private during his lifetime, they could not have been known in England, and might certainly be copied with little chance of detection. But every one must own that, in copying, Goldsmith wonderfully improved the original; and his application of the image to the Christian preacher gives it a moral sublimity to which it has no pretension in Chaulieu, who applies it to his own philosophical patience under his physical maladies.

Perhaps it might be wished that the sentence we have quoted from Mr. Prior were not so truthfully applicable to Goldsmith, and that he had written less "immediately from himself." A man who writes immediately from himself, that is, from his own personal experience alone; who does not appropriate, remodel, and re-create the results of his reading and reflection; who does not travel out of himself and live in others, must necessarily have a range narrow and circumscribed. That characteristic proves the defect of imagination, using the word in the higher sense in which alone it should be applied to so eminent a writer. Shakspeare does not write from himself when he creates Ariel and Macbeth; nor does he disdain to owe obligations to other writers, when he takes plot and incident from novelist, chronicler, historian, and by his imagination infuses its peculiar life into every character which conduces to the plot, or animates the incident. We may detect this comparative want of imagination in Goldsmith's critical tastes. A man of large imagination is always peculiarly susceptible to beauty whatever form it takes; he cannot cripple his judgment to any particular school, though he may reasonably prefer one to another. Goldsmith cannot appreciate Gray. In spite of Mr. Forster, we must think that Goldsmith's praise of his brother poet was as niggard and cold as it could well be; while his indirect sneers imply unequivocal disdain; and he actually thinks Parnell's 'Night Piece on Death,' which we fear Death has

long since kindly accepted, "might be made to surpass all the churchyard scenes that have since appeared." He clubs up Gray with Hurd and Mason, and, if we believe Mr. Cradock (and there is no reason why we should not), he actually proposes to amend the famous 'Elegy' by leaving out an idle word in every line, as thus :—

> "The curfew tolls the knell of day,
> The lowing herd winds o'er the lea,
> The ploughman homeward plods his way ;"—

and here, in full career "to leave Gray and the world to darkness and—" he is fortunately stopped ; having contrived, by amendments that may rank amongst the most ingenious of his literary efforts,—amendments confined to the skilful omission of three words, —to strip the stanza of all the music which redeems its real blemishes, while of the blemishes themselves he has evidently no perception!* Goldsmith's systematic aversion to epithets is indeed a sign of defect in the imaginative faculty. For the epithet is often (and in no poet more than Gray) precisely that word in a verse which addresses itself most to the imagination of the reader, and tests most severely that of the author. A good epithet is always an image. Shakspeare has a line made up of epithets—

> "The gaudy, babbling, and remorseless day."

Goldsmith would have thought he rid it of impertinent superfluities by reducing the line to—

> "The day!"

The beauties of Sterne, which certainly do not lie most on the surface, and consist in perpetual, indirect appeals to the imagination, appear to have been perfectly incomprehensible to Goldsmith. He spoke with absolute contempt of Milton's prose works; he undervalued the Elizabethan dramatists ; and fell into

* For those blemishes, which are in truthfulness of picture, see the subsequent article on Gray, p. 140.

the most prosaic and unimaginative of all possible criticisms upon Shakspeare, whose beauties, he says, "seem rather the result of chance than design, and who labours to satisfy his audience with monsters and mummery."

Having shown what Goldsmith did not admire, it is just to show what he did. And it will be readily seen that the poetry which most pleased his taste made the smallest demand on his imagination. In the brief criticisms introduced into a compilation from the English Poets, edited with his name, he says of Tickell's poem on the '*Death of Addison*,' "this elegy is one of the finest in the language." Of a '*Letter from Italy to Lord Halifax*,' that, "had its harmony been equal to Pope's versification, it would be incontestably the finest poem in the language." Of Rowe's song, '*Despairing beside a clear Stream*,' "this is better than anything of the kind in our language." Of '*Cooper's Hill*,' "This poem, though it may have been exceeded by later attempts in description, yet deserves the highest applause, as it far surpasses all that went before it." While of the '*Penseroso*' and '*L'Allegro*' he cannot say more than that "it is certain the imagination shown in them is correct and strong; the introduction to both in the irregular measure is borrowed from the Italian, and hurts an English ear:" nor of Thomson's 'Palemon and Lavinia' than that, "though Mr. Thomson is generally a verbose and affected poet, he has told his story with unusual simplicity, but that it (the extract) is rather given for being much esteemed by the public than by the editor."

Goldsmith wrote more than two acts of a tragedy, which he appears never to have finished, and, indeed, to have destroyed. We cannot but think the loss fortunate for his fame. We suspect that tragedy would have been precisely the composition in which, next always to criticism, this charming writer would most have failed. Master of a pathos, exquisite of its kind,

it is the pathos intimately allied to humour, and touching upon the tears that lie nearest to our smiles. Of that depth of thought, that loftiness of conception, which a tragedy worthy his fame would have required, he could not have been capable. With the passions necessary to the elements of tragedy, love and terror, he nowhere shows himself familiar. The last, indeed, he does not attempt. The former he touches with a delicate but feeble hand, and rather plays over the surface of the passion than throws any light upon its depths. The loves of Squire Thornhill and Olivia, the nearest approach to the graver aspects of the emotion which he has ventured to make, are among the least satisfactory parts of his immortal novel. We suspect the reason to be that Goldsmith was never seriously in love himself.

From the same deficiency of imagination, he cannot paint a bad man with consistency and power. As his good men have always some of his own foibles; so his bad men, with whom he could not identify himself, are little better than sharpers, of whose villany his goodnature seems scarcely conscious.

But it is in the narrowness of his range, and in the close identity of his characters with his own heart and experience, that we are to find the main cause of Goldsmith's universal and unfading popularity. He had in himself an original to draw from, with precisely those qualities which win general affection. Loveable himself, in spite of all his grave faults, he makes loveable the various copies that he takes from the master portrait. His secret is this—the emotions he commands are pleasurable. He is precisely what Johnson calls him, "*affectuum lenis dominator*"—*potens* because *lenis*. He is never above the height of the humblest understanding; and, by touching the human heart, he raises himself to a level with the loftiest. He has to perfection what the Germans call *Anmuth*. His muse wears the zone of the Graces.

There is another peculiarity in Goldsmith. Precisely because his ideas are not numerous, he has the most complete command over them. They have all the versatility of a practised company. He can make them do duty alike in a poem, a comedy, a novel, an essay. Like Bobadil, he selects "but nineteen more to himself — gentlemen of good spirit, strong and able constitutions, teaches them the special rules—your punto, your reverso," and may then boast, with more truth than Bobadil, that he can make them a match for "forty thousand strong." Various, in the larger sense of the word, as we apply it to Goethe or Shakspeare, he was not; but he was wonderfully versatile. He always addresses the same feelings, presents the same phases of life, the same family of thought—but then it is in all ways, which are rarely indeed at the command of the same man. Whether you read 'The Deserted Village,' 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' 'The Goodnatured Man,' or 'The Citizen of the World,' you find at the close that much the same emotions have been awakened —the heart has been touched much in the same place. But with what pliant aptitude the form and mode are changed and disguised! Poem, novel, essay, drama, how exquisite of its kind! The humour that draws tears, and the pathos that provokes smiles, will be popular to the end of the world. That these merits imply an extraordinary charm of style, is self-evident. "The style is the man," says a French authority; —at all events, the style is the writer. But where in this irregular course of study—where in his college associations or his village festivities—did this man, with his rustic manners and Irish brogue, pick up a style so pure, so delicate? How comes it that, in all the miry paths of life that he had trodden, no speck ever sullied the robe of his modest and graceful muse? How, amidst all that love for inferior company, which never to the last forsook him, did he keep his genius so free from every touch of vulgarity? What style

in the English language is more thoroughly elegant and high bred—more impressed with the stamp of gentleman—its ease so polished, its dignity so sweet? Johnson says that "Goldsmith was a plant that flowered late." This is not strictly true. In the earlier letters of Goldsmith, those, for instance, written from Edinburgh, we see (as has been before implied) the same peculiar graces of diction, the same happy humour, with its undercurrent of tenderness, which make the works of his maturity so delightful. On examining narrowly the character of Goldsmith, we find, even in what are commonly regarded as its defects, and served to render him ridiculous in the circles of London, some clue to the enigma of the contrast between the habits of the man and the style of the writer. Goldsmith never, from the period at which he lounged at the college-gates as a sizar to the time when his peach-blossom coat attracted the mirth of Garrick, divested himself of the notion that he was a gentleman. This conviction was almost the strongest he possessed; the more it was invaded, the more he clung to it. He surrounded it with all the keenest susceptibilities of his sensitive nature. Nothing so galled and offended him as a hint to the contrary. To be liked as a jester, not companion—to be despised for his poverty—to be underrated as a sizar—to be taunted by a schoolboy with a question of his gentility—were cruelties beyond all others that fate could inflict. This conviction, and its concomitant yearning for respect, could not influence conventional manners, formed under auspices the least propitious. It could not invest with dignity the stunted and awkward figure; it could not check the lively impulses of a quick blundering Irish temper; but in that best and most sacred part of him, his genius, it moulded his taste to instinctive refinement. Here he was always true to his ideal. There is something to us inexpressibly touching in the jealous religion with which this man, exposed to the rough trials and

coarse temptations of life, preserved the sanctity of his muse. The troops of Comus in vain "knit hands and beat the ground" by the stream in which that pure Sabrina "commends her fair innocence to the flood:"—

> "Summer drouth or singed air
> Never scorch those tresses fair,
> Nor wet October's torrent flood
> The molten crystal fills with mud."

To judge by Goldsmith's early letters, we are inclined to believe that Le Sage was one of his first models in diction. When we read them, with their naïve accounts of his own credulity—the amusing adventures they recite—their mingled simplicity and shrewdness—we seem to be opening a new chapter in the youthful history of Gil Blas. Goldsmith, indeed, was in himself a kind of Irish Gil Blas, terminating in a Fabricio instead of a minister's secretary and retired statesman. But if Le Sage did really influence his earlier mode of description and his easy views of life, he added in his maturer years the grace of a sentiment and the softness of a pathos all his own. He never attained to that wonderful knowledge of the world, that careless comprehension of external character in its widest varieties, which render Gil Blas the wisest novel that man ever wrote; but with much of Le Sage's polished facility of narrative he combined a command over emotions which Le Sage never aspired to reach. He added poetry to the Frenchman's prose,—for Goldsmith was a poet, Le Sage was not.

While the character of Goldsmith tends to illustrate his genius, so, on the other hand, we may find in certain idiosyncrasies of the genius the clue to the most remarkable foibles of the character. We have seen how much the range of Goldsmith was confined to his personal feelings and experience, how constantly he was possessed with the sense of his own individuality. And this consciousness of self,

which imparts so indescribable a truthfulness to the happier creations of the writer, gives the appearance of a fidgety and restless vanity to the man. Goldsmith carried that self-consciousness with him into all societies; and forgetfulness of self is the only secret of social ease. Aware of merit, which he uneasily felt he was not able to make manifest when the pen was out of his hand, Goldsmith was always in Goldsmith's way; to borrow his own line, there was—

"Nobody with him at sea but himself."

The popular stories of his envy and jealousy we know now to be exaggerated—some of them wholly untrue; but with that candour which almost invariably belongs to over-sensitive men, with whom self is prominent, every passing shade of such emotions, from which minds the kindest and spirits the noblest may not be always free, he was apt at once to betray. He had not, as Boswell opines, "more envy than other people," but he talked of it more freely. Mr. Forster says truly, in the course of his temperate but subtle vindication of Goldsmith in this respect—a vindication evincing very profound acquaintance with some of the most intricate chords of human nature,—"This free talking did all the mischief. He was simple enough to say aloud what others would more prudently have concealed."

To the same self-consciousness we must ascribe the peculiarities more external. Goldsmith could not think of himself without many causes for distrust. He was aware of his defects of person, of "his ugly face," of his brogue, of his deficiency in the conventional manners of cultivated society. "Too little self-confidence," says Mr. Forster, well and pithily, "begets the forms of vanity." But how could he be possibly blind to his immeasurable superiority in genius, over almost all with whom life could bring him into contact? And we must remember, that, at all events in the earlier stages of his career, that

genius was not recognised. He thus entered the social world both proud and bashful. "Society," says Mr. Forster, "exposed him to continual misconstruction; so that few more touching things have been recorded of him than those which have most awakened laughter. 'People are greatly mistaken in me' (he remarked on one occasion). 'A notion goes about, that when I am silent I mean to be impudent; but I assure you, gentlemen, my silence proceeds from bashfulness.' From the same cause proceeded the unconcealed talk which was less easily forgiven than silence." Grasping at that respect of which he was so tenacious, he resorts to fine clothes to set off his homely person—to paradoxes in conversation to enforce attention; he gives breakfasts and suppers he can ill afford; he apologises for lodgings beneath his dignity. He is always keeping the hat off his head, to hide some patch on his coat. This sensitiveness, proceeding from intense self-consciousness, is mixed up with the most amiable attributes of his nature, and has subjected even his lavish generosity, his cordial charity, to the imputation of a want of true feeling. There seems certainly some neglect of his nearest kindred, not very satisfactorily explained, and not very consistent with his kindly nature. The household relations with all are, however, so complicated and so little to be judged fairly by others, that it is both just and prudent to extend to the dead that tacit acquiescence in their mysterious sanctity which we accord to the living. It is too much the fashion to parade a man's Lares in his funeral procession, and to claim them as public property the moment they have left the hearth. Perhaps, however, we may get some clue to a secret that has attracted so much loose conjecture, in the letter which Goldsmith himself addresses to his brother Maurice:—"Dear brother," he writes, "I should have answered your letter sooner, but in truth *I am not fond of thinking of the necessities of those I love, when it is so*

*very little in my power to help them.*" Distress was so painful to Goldsmith, that, at whatever cost, he must get it out of his way. He will give it the coat from his back, the blankets from his bed, the last guinea in his pocket. In one of the most pleasing anecdotes recorded of him, Goldsmith himself illustrates this sympathy of the nerves. He throws down his cards when playing at whist, runs out of doors, and says, on his return, "I could not bear to hear that unfortunate woman in the street, half singing, half sobbing; her voice grated painfully on my ear, and jarred my whole frame, so that I could not rest till I had sent her away."* Such was his ready tenderness to distress—the pity that gave ere charity began. But if he could give nothing to the distress—if he could not send it away,—then he must hide from it,—put it out of his thoughts. The suffering that was present was thus always usurping the juster claims of the suffering that was absent. The beggar or impostor was constantly intercepting the resources of the day from their better channels towards relations, of whose necessities "he is not fond of thinking." He cannot bear to write to them and give nothing; and to think of them is a pain to be shunned. But never must we forget, in justice to Goldsmith, that, with all his consciousness of self, he was the least selfish of men—that his sensitiveness, if morbid, was at least genuine. He had not that fineness of nerves which permitted Rousseau to leave his friend in a fit in the street, nor that tenderness of disposition which could have dropped his children into a foundling hospital. Like Rousseau, he felt self to a disease; but, unlike Rousseau, the feverish sensitiveness was contagious, and embraced all that came within his reach. Irritable, sore, justly provoked as he often

* Nevertheless we suspect the genuineness of this anecdote: it seems to have escaped Goldsmith's biographers that a very similar story is told (containing the main idea "of the voice between singing and crying") of the Black Gentleman, in 'The Citizen of the World,' published many years before the date of the anecdote.

was, he shrunk from inflicting the pain he received. No wound to his vanity, no outrage to his pride, ever made him malignant and revengeful. He did not smile and hate, he writhed and forgave.

Something of Goldsmith's facility to distress is to be found in the boyhood of Schiller. Similar anecdotes are told of both—in stripping themselves of clothing to relieve some more destitute object. Their fates, at the onset of life, were not very dissimilar; but Schiller settled into the firm virtues of manhood —Goldsmith remained to the last with the spontaneous impulses of the child. Schiller, however, had two great advantages denied to Goldsmith. First, his genius was recognised early and liberally. Secondly, he was fortunate enough to make a happy and congenial marriage. But Goldsmith's youth was without renown, and his manhood without a home. If any man ever could have been improved by the domestic influences, that man would have been Goldsmith. Had it been his fate to meet with a woman who could have loved him despite his faults, and respected him despite his foibles, we cannot but think that his life would have been much more in harmony with his genius, his desultory affections would have been concentered, his craving self-love appeased, his pursuits been more settled, his character more solid. A nature like Goldsmith's, so affectionate and so confiding—so susceptible to simple innocent enjoyments —so dependent on others for the sunshine of existence, does not fairly flower if deprived of the atmosphere of home.

We have left our author in his twenty-ninth year, a man of letters at last; an author by compulsion, with "the hope of greatness and distinction,—day-star of his wanderings and privations,—more than ever dim, distant, cold." We will leave our readers to trace in Mr. Forster's graphic and instructive pages the process of his apprenticeship;—his task-work at the Review; his quarrels with the proprietor;

his translations from the French of the 'Memoirs of a Protestant condemned to the Galleys of France for his Religion;' his despondent retreat to the Peckham academy; his return to the town and the pen; "in a garret writing for bread, expecting to be dunned for a milk-score;" his hopes of a medical appointment to a factory on the coast of Coromandel; their mysterious frustration; his examination at Surgeons' Hall as mate to an hospital, and his rejection as not qualified; his labours in the Critical Review; and his Memoir of Voltaire: we pass over the delicate and subtle transition marked with fine discrimination by Mr. Forster, from "authorship by compulsion" to "authorship by choice;" when the "Bee" begins to gather honey in a spring yet too raw and premature; when "the Citizen of the World" yet finds the world reluctant to admit him to the franchise; and pause to behold 'the Literary Drudge,' "as *we* at the club" (says Sir John Hawkins in all the pomp of his "shoes and *staukins*") "considered him," having gained entry to the learned festivities at the Turk's Head, formed his first acquaintance with Johnson, and been presented .(if Goldsmith would here allow the epithets to be more than expletives), to "the gaudy, babbling, and remorseless"—Boswell.—But the Poet had arrived at the foot of the Hill, "Là ove terminava quelle valle." He might say, with the great pilgrim who had preceded him through the *selva selvaggia*,

> "Guarda in alto, e vidi le sue spalle
> Vestite già de' raggi del pianeta."

As yet Goldsmith had never prefixed his name to his publications, and had done comparatively little to make the world aware of the powers he possessed; but Johnson's acute eye had detected, in the anonymous essayist, a master in composition. "Sir," said he to the wondering Boswell, "Goldsmith is one of the first men we have now as an author."

The period of obscurity is passed. Through all

the drudgery for bread, works worthy of fame, worthy to make known to the world the name of its author, had been silently accomplished. "One day," says Johnson, "I received a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and, as it was not in his power to come to me, begging I would come to him directly." The scene is well known: the arrest by the landlady; the violent passion of the poet; the bottle of madeira on the table, which Johnson corks up; the inquiry into the means by which the poet may be extricated; the production of a novel ready for the press; Johnson's glance at the MS., his perception of its merit, and his sale of the copyright for 60*l.* But this is not all: "on the very day of the arrest," says Mr. Forster, "'The Traveller' lay completed in the poet's desk;" and on the 19th of December, 1764, the first work bearing the name of Oliver Goldsmith, 'The Traveller,' was published.

From this time the author's fame is established: the rest of his career is, so far as literary achievement is concerned, a succession of triumphs. The effect produced by 'The Traveller' was not instantaneous; but in eight months it reached its fourth edition. His essays were republished in three volumes and acknowledged. 'The Vicar of Wakefield' followed, and, though not much helped by friend or critic, reached its third edition in a few months. Poet, essayist, novelist, already; he aspires to the fame of the drama. He had always been a passionate lover of the stage: in the worst hours of poverty he had contrived to escape from his own life, to that fair illusion on the boards. With much difficulty, humiliation, wear and tear of mind, he at length succeeds in getting 'The Goodnatured Man' upon the stage. On the 29th of January, 1768, that comedy appeared: its success seems to have been equivocal on the stage, and its run limited to ten nights, with an eleventh night a month later for the benefit of Shuter, whose inimitable acting of

Croaker saved the play; but, no doubt, it served to render the author's name more generally known. Its sale proved the interest felt in it by the public. Judicious readers could not but ratify, at least, the praise of Johnson, that "it was the best comedy since the Provoked Husband" And the profits had a sensible influence on Goldsmith's mode of life. Passing (and, alas! passingly) rich, with 300*l.* for the performance, and 100*l.* for the copyright, he descended from his attic story in the staircase, Inner Temple, and purchased chambers in Brick Court: a purchase which consumed the 400*l.* he had received. Thus the increased means were but the prelude to difficulties on a larger scale. Money thus continues to be the necessary object; and for money he writes his Roman History; but it is to his honour, that no necessities can compel him to write for money only. 'The Deserted Village' proceeds with the Roman History: in 1770 that poem appears: Gray hears it read aloud to him, and, juster to Goldsmith than Goldsmith to Gray, exclaims, "That man is a poet!" In 1773 appears 'She Stoops to Conquer:' it is received throughout with the greatest acclamations; its effect was signal,—it completed the revolution which 'The Goodnatured Man' had too prematurely commenced: it annihilated, for the time at least, 'the Sentimental Comedy.'

We are now in the meridian of that fourth subdivision of his life which Mr. Forster has described: —Goldsmith is at the height of his renown. Even his Histories, though really not better than elegant compilations, were regarded with respect by his contemporaries. Johnson sets him above Robertson as an historian. What wants our Author? that for which he has pined all his life—the personal consideration he feels to be his due. All the more eminent of his associates had remembered him but as 'little Goldy,' and 'little Goldy' they persist in considering him still. We acquit Boswell of the

more unamiable motives for depreciation, which are uncharitably assigned to him. But Boswell was evidently unable to measure the genius of Goldsmith, or comprehend that in 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' 'The Deserted Village,' and 'She Stoops to Conquer,' posterity would venerate an excellence, equal at least to the merits of 'Rasselas,' 'London,' and 'Irene.' The concurrent mass of testimony is too strong to permit us to doubt that there was something in Goldsmith's manner and conversation, which, if it did not justify contempt, tended inevitably to his disparagement. And what that something was is sufficiently evident in the uneasy consciousness of self to which we have referred. Peculiarities of dress, even if amounting to foppery, are common among eminent men, and are carried off from ridicule by ease in some, or stateliness in others. We may smile at Chatham, scrupulously crowned in his best wig, if intending to speak; at Erskine, drawing on his bright yellow gloves before he rose to plead; at Horace Walpole, in a cravat of Gibbon's carvings; at Raleigh, loading his shoes with jewels so heavy that he could scarcely walk; at Petrarch, pinching his feet till he crippled them; at the rings which covered the philosophical fingers of Aristotle; at the bare throat of Lord Byron; the Armenian dress of Rousseau; the scarlet and gold coat of Voltaire; or the prudent carefulness with which Cæsar scratched his head, so as not to disturb the locks arranged over the bald place. But most of these men, we apprehend, found it easy to enforce respect and curb impertinence. Many great men are silent, or, what is worse, dull in conversation, and are yet not despised for it. The talk of Addison and Gibbon was very inferior to their books. The talent of conversation is one not to be lightly rated; carried to a high degree, it implies and necessitates the possession of many rare faculties. But while the gift proves a clever

man, the want of it is no proof of a dull one. "Conversation," says Mr. Forster, truly, "is a game where the wise do not always win." That Goldsmith often talked foolishly, there is sufficient authority to induce us to believe. Indeed, when we consider that two-thirds of the conversation among literary men are composed of criticism, and that Goldsmith was, perhaps, the very worst critic that any man of ability ever was, he would only have had to talk much the same as he wrote in his remarks upon the poems admitted into "the Beauties of English Poetry," to have seemed either an envious man or a shallow one. Yet, after all, we have few records left to us of the foolish sayings: on the contrary, most of the sayings which come down to us as specimens of his table talk, when upon persons or things, not books, are among the best in a circle which comprised the best talkers of the age. And we incline to think that his vindicators are not far wrong in supposing that much of what passed for silly, was drollery in disguise. It was not, we apprehend, so much the words as the manner that provoked ridicule. With his acute self-consciousness, Goldsmith was never at his ease in the society of learned wits and sarcastic men of the world. Too well aware of his inclination to levity, he is thus often "solemn," as Warton found him. He plays a part in those ungenial circles, and plays it ill. There is a grotesque incongruity about him, which strikes us even at this distance, and through the medium of the tender reverence he commands. The peach-blossom coat Topham Beauclerk could have borne away on his well-bred shoulders as an elegant audacity; but it is out of all keeping on the form which Goldsmith himself indignantly suspects has been taken for a tailor's. Mr. Forster says, "that insensibility was what he wanted most, and it is amazing to think how small an amount of it would have exalted Dr. Goldsmith's position in the literary circles of

his day." This is true; but it is just that we should here discriminate: there are various kinds of sensitiveness. Keen susceptibility to sneers upon honour or assaults on character, is no weakness—it is the noble jealousy of a noble heart; sensitiveness to the perfidy of false friends, affection trifled with, and trust betrayed, is not morbidity—it is the healthful action of a generous nature. But it was not on these matters that Goldsmith's susceptibility was over acute. He could boast that there was not a country in Europe in which he was not a debtor; and he could turn into philosophical merriment the tricks that had imposed on his credulity. Goldsmith's sensitiveness was as to his person, his dress, his manners, his *gentility*—the attention he sought to exact, the effect that he laboured to create; and sensitiveness of this kind can only be characterised as the epidermis of self-love in a state of chronic inflammation.

To have seen and heard Goldsmith to advantage one should have followed him from the Turk's Head—escaped with him from the polished sneer of Beauclerk—the arch malice of Garrick—the imperious domination of Johnson—the affluent resources of Burke—the conceited condescension of Boswell—one should not have sat next him at a table where he is stopped, when talking his best, by a "Hush! the Doctor (Johnson) is going to say something;" or where, politely thanking a pedantic schoolmaster for an invitation he supposes meant for himself, he, the unsurpassed writer of a great age, is crushed with a "No—no! 'tis not you I mean, Doctor Minor,—'tis Doctor Major there." One should have seen him presiding over the banquet where he himself was Mæcenas—his gay spirit released from restraint, and the "two great wrinkles between the brows" smoothed at sight of the happy faces he loved to contemplate;—singing songs, cracking jokes:—or, better still, one should, like the young adventurer whom he found

reading *Boileau* in the Temple Gardens, have crept into his confidence by its open gate of benevolence. Had the biographer before us lived in that day, we are sure we should have received very different impressions of Goldsmith's conversational eloquence. We can well conceive how an admirer so delicate and earnest would have soothed to sleep the self-distrust, broken the solemn spell of artificial restraint, by the homage of due respect,—have led the frank poet, too happy to "tell of all he felt and all he knew," to converse of his own early wanderings and light-hearted trials, when the pony walked away with him into the Highlands;—when the Carinthian shut the door in his face;—when he lived with the beggars in Axe Lane, or pounded in the apothecary's mortar. Here, we believe, his talk would have been worthy of his books; full of that experience in which lay his wisdom,—of gentle pathos, and bewitching humour. "Vates caret vate;" the poet wanted the poet's heart to understand, the poet's tongue to speak of him.

But we left Goldsmith at the height of his renown. His likeness is in the print-shops—his name in the journals—complimentary poems rain upon him—imitations abound—and the higher the front he raises, the more conspicuous the butt he presents to his relentless friends. In the confession of Johnson, "the partiality of his friends was always against him; it was with difficulty we could give him a hearing." His necessities increase with his fame and his new dignity, for "dignity," says a certain sage, "requires a great deal to keep up!" He pauses from works that yield the fame, to drudge on works that will keep up the dignity. He toils at a Grecian History, knowing, we suspect, as little Greek as a man who has been last at a college examination can well know. He pursues undaunted his way through 'Animated Nature,' with the doubt of Dr. Johnson "whether he could distinguish a cow from a horse"

—but with a certainty more strong than the doubt that "he would make a very fine book of it." He forms a plan for a Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, to which he brings but the art of composition, and the science taught in Laputa of extracting sunbeams from cucumbers. But the thick robust form begins to give way, the careless spirits to flag. Cradock, one of the kindest, perhaps because one of the most recent, of his friends, and not knowing him till after little Goldy had become great Goldsmith, finds him much altered; his usual cheerfulness "all forced." He suggests a subscription edition of the 'Traveller' and 'Deserted Village.' But Goldsmith's difficulties were probably too great to be met by such relief. "He rather submitted than encouraged, and the scheme fell to the ground." Amidst these cares he appears at the St. James's Coffeehouse, and, for his comfort, hears read a series of satirical epitaphs upon him; of which Garrick's, the only one preserved, is perhaps a mild specimen:—

> "Here lies poet Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
> Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

This is the latest tribute offered to the man whose life had been one struggle for social estimation! And the latest effort of the sensitive genius is a characteristic (it is his single) revenge;—the unfinished poem of 'Retaliation.' No trace of malignity embitters this satire; perhaps, so far as it goes, the most perfect in the English language. Kindly and grateful to those who had been kind to him; blending the happiest praise with the justest blame to those who had so mercilessly galled his vain, proud, large, loving heart. The hand rests in the midst of that exquisite tribute to the one friend who saw, even in the talk like poor Poll, but "excess of conviviality," —which gives the surest immortality to Reynolds himself. An old local disorder returns to him, "brought on by neglect," and "continued vexation

of mind arising from involved circumstances." He arrives in London the middle of March, struggling with symptoms of low nervous fever. He obstinately persists, against the advice of his medical attendants, to dose himself with James's powders; the disease takes root, becomes alarming; sleep deserts him. Yet at times, even in dying, that light uncomprehended spirit can become cheerful; but the cheerfulness, we fear, was on the surface, as it had been when feeling "horrid tortures" at the supposed failure of his first play, and when, while none "could imagine to themselves the anguish of his heart," he sang his favourite song. His physician says, "Your pulse is in greater disorder than it should be from the degree of fever you have,—is your mind at ease?" "It is not," answered Goldsmith; and "these," says Mr. Forster, "are the last words we hear him utter in this world." On the 4th of April, 1774, and at the early age of forty-five, Oliver Goldsmith died.

We shall not pursue the more obvious moral to be drawn from the life thus closed. The world satisfies itself too easily when it dismisses the memoir of one of its benefactors with some trite maxim drawn from the errors of genius. In spite of all Goldsmith's faults, we will not dispute Mr. Forster's assertion,

"that he worthily did the work that was in him to do; proved himself in his garret a gentleman of nature, and left the world no ungenerous bequest. . . . Nor have posterity been backward to acknowledge the debt which his contemporaries left them to discharge; and it is with calm, unruffled, joyful aspect on the one hand, and with grateful, loving, eager admiration on the other, that the creditor and his debtor at length stand face to face."

To what follows we invite a closer attention.

"All this is to the world's honour as well as gain; which has yet to consider, notwithstanding, with a view to its own larger profit in both, if its debt to the man of genius might not earlier be discharged, and if the thorns that only become invisible beneath the laurel that overgrows his grave, should not

rather, while he lives, be plucked away. It is not an act of parliament which can determine this . . . it must flow from a higher sense than has at any period prevailed in England of the duties and responsibilities assumed by the public writer, and of the social consideration and respect that their effectual discharge should have undisputed right to claim. The world will be greatly the gainer when such time shall arrive; and when the biography of the man of genius shall no longer be a picture of the most harsh struggles and mean necessities to which man's life is subject, exhibited as in shameful contrast to the calm and classic glory of his fame."

These eloquent reflections are pertinent to the subject. Goldsmith, indeed, was one whom, perhaps, no social consideration which the world can pay would have lifted into the personal respect of his associates, or out of the "mean necessities" which, in his later life at least, his own improvidence in some degree wantonly created. But the observations apply to a large class, the majority of whom have his just pride without its concomitant foibles, and are exposed to the same harsh struggles, without the same aggravations in their own errors. The evil complained of is patent, and but seldom denied. The remedy, however, is difficult, and admits of too much dispute to allow us, now and here, to discuss it. We content ourselves with a few passing observations.

That the present pension-list, intended as a relief to all the science and literature of the British empire, is miserably inadequate, is incontestable. It is somewhere about half the sum which a country squire, with economy, devotes to the maintenance of a pack of fox-hounds. It may be a question whether there should be any pension-list whatever for men of literature and science; there can be none, that, if it is to exist, it should be worthy of the nation that bestows the bounty. It is dangerous to provoke comparison between the salary of the Master of the Buckhounds and the sum apportioned to the aggregate intellect which the Monarchy of Great Britain (in the act itself of the donation) professes to foster or reward. But the principle of a pension-list is not

one that dignifies the community of letters, nor does it meet the questions at issue. Even in a pecuniary point of view, a sum might often be necessary for a limited period in the production of a particular work, which it would not be necessary to continue for life, and which need not be applied to the mere relief of positive distress, or the support of infirmity and age. Schiller was in the prime of his life, and quite capable of being a bookseller's drudge, perhaps of writing Grecian histories, and works on Animated Nature, when two noblemen, thinking that his genius was meant for other things, subscribed to endow him with a pension for three years, to enable him to do that which he was calculated best to do. It came to Schiller at the right time of his existence. It served, we believe, not only to aid his genius, but to soften his heart. Some help of a similar nature, a national fund, in connection with the pension-list, might not unprofitably bestow.

Perhaps, in any comprehensive system of national education which the conflicting opinions and prejudices of party may permit the legislature ultimately to accomplish, means may be taken to render the Mechanics' Institutes (many of which are fast decaying, and cannot, we believe, long exist upon resources wholly voluntary) permanent and valuable auxiliaries to popular instruction; and endowed lectureships or professorships, at the more important of these in our larger towns, might be devoted to men distinguished in letters and science, connect them more with the practical world, occupy but little of their time, and yield them emoluments, if modest, still sufficient to relieve them from actual dependence on the ordinary public and trading booksellers.

Perhaps, too, in the point of social consideration, it may be well to reflect whether it is wise or just that England should be the only country in which men of letters are deprived of the ordinary social honours, which tend to raise literature to its proper

place in the estimation of the crowd. Hereditary distinctions (a peerage or a baronetcy) require the possession of a wealth that it would be absurd to expect in the class of which we treat. Even where the government might overlook such requirement, the author, if prudent, could not suffer himself to do so; and Dr. Southey wisely refused the baronetcy offered to him. But there are honours in this country, as in others, which are not hereditary, and are supposed to be assigned to merit. It may be well to talk of orders and badges as unphilosophical; but if they are objects of emulation, proofs of desert, or symbols of social dignity in the eyes of others, we do not see why literature and science should be excluded from their attainment. They may not elevate the possessor in the eyes of the few; but that is not the question. They may elevate the cultivation of literature in the eyes of the many, and insensibly train the opinions of "the world" to regard with honour those to whom the state accords the outward distinction it bestows on diplomatists and soldiers. An order created solely for men of science and letters, as has been more than once suggested, would wholly fail in its object. There is no reason why they should be separated from others who deserve well of their country. On the contrary, it is to amalgamate them with their fellow-citizens in honours as in labours that we desire; and to suffer them to rank (where their reputation so entitles them) with whomsoever be the other claimants to social consideration. There is not a city knight who would not jeer at an order consisting only of authors, to whose united rentroll he would prefer even half a dozen railway debentures. If any practical honours ever be accorded to authors, philosophers, or artists, agreeably to the usual principles of an aristocratic monarchy, we fear, strange though it may appear to sages, that they must be honours shared with dukes and earls, ambassadors and generals.

That some abuse, favour, and partiality would attend such distinctions, we readily concede. These attend all honours. But public opinion would operate perhaps more strongly on the class we refer to than on any other in resenting unworthy selection or illiberal exclusion. Briefly,—in a country in which both the constitution and the popular modes of thinking are essentially aristocratic, should those of our countrymen whom foreign nations the most esteem, to whom we ourselves are under obligations of the highest kind, and in whom posterity will regard the loftiest representatives of the age that they adorn, be the only men in pursuit of distinction to whom the honours of aristocracy are denied?—the only men living under a monarchy to whom the austere philosophy of a republic is to be applied; a republic, indeed, in which they are admitted to the equality of the old villeins; all equal in being equally shut out from the lists of knighthood; and enrolled in the fraternity of Esaus, who have lost their birthright, but without receiving the pottage.

We must now turn more directly to the very remarkable and delightful biography which has induced this recurrence to an author whose life always interests, and whose books always charm. We know of no man more fit for the task he has undertaken than Mr. Forster. He brings to it a mind habitually critical, subtle, and inquiring; that strong sympathy with men of letters which the life of Goldsmith especially demands; a large practical knowledge of the infirmities and misfortunes, as well as the virtues and solaces of the class, with which kindred pursuits must have made him familiar; an extensive store of general information; a style, not always equal it is true, but never bald nor insipid; often weighty with earnest thought, often coloured with eloquence, animated or touching.

Mr. Forster's 'Lives of the Statesmen of the

Commonwealth,'—a work of high merit, and especially so for the qualities such an undertaking most needs,—have habituated him to the difficulties of one of the most difficult departments in literary art; viz., the biography of men with whom the author was unacquainted, and the main facts of whose lives are already generally known. It is no ordinary talent that can make a biography of this kind both interesting and important; give not only a seeming but a genuine originality to materials with which we had thought ourselves familiar; and supply a gap in previous researches of which we were scarcely aware, till the ingenuity which detected the gap had durably repaired it. Mr. Forster has treated the subject before us with a judgment correspondent to the ability. That he is more lenient to his hero than we always are, is natural. The duties of a reviewer are sterner than those of a biographer. But Mr. Forster does not vindicate Goldsmith from all his errors with the violent effort of Mr. Prior; and, by candid if guarded admissions, turns aside that reaction from wilful indulgence to rigid justice which Mr. Prior could not fail to create. He concedes all that we demand, though we may have enforced the concessions somewhat more stringently than he intended, when he says, "It is not an example I would wish to inculcate. It would be dangerous to try any such process for the chance of another Goldsmith." What follows is truly said,—and in the patient care with which Mr. Forster follows out his proposition, consist much of the originality and value of his work:—"The truth is important to be kept in mind, that genius is in no respect allied to these weaknesses, but, when unhappily connected with them, is in itself a means to avert their most evil consequences."

It was impossible to write a thick volume on Goldsmith, and not use the facts which others had used before. Facts are open to all men. They are the brick earth upon the common land, from which, by

right immemorial, each man may build his castle or his cottage. It is not because one man has used bricks before us, that we are to confine ourselves to mortar and rubble. Mr. Prior has published a letter in which he seems to claim an exclusive property in Goldsmith, and to regard Mr. Forster's biography as a trespass upon his rights. Mr. Forster's reply is complete as to the details upon which Mr. Prior justifies so extraordinary a claim. Upon the principle of the claim itself, it would be idle to waste many words in controversy. The matter lies in a nutshell. Mr. Prior mistakes the whole question at issue, when he compares a wholesale plagiarism from works of imagination, to the adaptation of facts in a work of biography. In the former, the author creates materials that did not exist before;—he not only discovers the ground, he makes it. In the latter, he does but apply to his individual use, that which not only before existed, but which the public have a paramount interest in regarding as public property. If anything belongs to a nation, it is the lives of its great men; if anything lies out of the pale of a patent, it is historical truth. Fact is always improveable—Fiction not so. Facts belong to science,—Fiction to art. Every year some cultivator of science borrows the facts of another. Are we to have no Histories of England because Hume wrote a History of England? or is any new writer of that History to avoid the facts which Hume disburied from the chronicles? Goldsmith himself, in his History of England, takes pretty largely from Hume; but Hume's warmest admirers cannot assert that Hume's rights are invaded. All they can say is, that Goldsmith does not supersede Hume. The only immunity a writer who deals with facts can find against rivals and successors is to do his work so well that the public will either think all further labour on the same subject uncalled for, or prefer the old work, whatever its defects, to the new. Even in Fiction itself, we fear

that an author cannot guard himself from a pretty extensive invasion of what may be regarded as the facts of fiction, viz., the characters the author invents, or the new ideas he calls to life. Let a Corsair or a Childe Harold be famous, and before the year is out we have Corsairs and Childe Harolds enough to people a colony. They die off;—and the old Corsair and Childe Harold live on—because the original poems are both the first and the best of their kind. If they were not the best, it would not be sufficient to be the first. Many of Shakspeare's subjects were taken before him. But the world leaves it to antiquary and critic to hunt out the crude original. That is the true original—the permanent and standard development of any given idea—which improves the most what went before, and cannot be improved by what comes after. It is not in the disinterment of facts, but in the manner in which they take life and colour, that originality consists. Stones are on all the high roads, every man may throw them into the midst of a crowd, but every man is not a Cadmus who by throwing a stone gets rid of the pre-existences useless to his purpose, and retains only those that aid him in building up his city. Had Mr. Forster borrowed infinitely more largely from Mr. Prior's facts than he has done, the mode in which he has selected, arranged, and applied them, would not leave his biography less peculiarly his own. Indeed, we do not know any work of the kind more distinctly original. And, since Mr. Prior provokes the observation, we remember few instances in the lists of literary chivalry, in which the shield of a rival has been touched with more courteous forbearance:—Not till Mr. Forster's self-defence was extorted, had the public been called upon to notice what errors had been corrected,—to what anecdotes, marred in the telling, the point had been restored. While obligations were acknowledged with frank respect, blunders were removed with generous silence.

The subdivisions of Mr. Forster's work are philosophical and effective. In the first, he presents to us the childhood, the youth, the desultory adventures, which prepare us for the second—Authorship by compulsion; he leads us on, through the Authorship by choice, to the time when labour and inclination, both combined, place his hero where we now behold him, amongst the constellation of imperishable names—"the novelist, the dramatist, the poet."

Without that eternal attempt at stage grouping and stage effect, by which some of the French writers have distorted the even course of history, our pleasant biographer has quietly contrived to render picturesque and touching all the more interesting positions of the poet. Nothing can be more artful than the pause from ungenial and dreary studies, which invites us to contemplate the poor sizar listening to his own ballads;—or, before we see in full length the snubbed and derided butt of the London coteries, bids us halt to greet Nature smiling on her darling in the garret of "Garden Court;"—nothing more impressive for Goldsmith's vindication, than the steady enforcement of those scenes in which, what elsewhere might be warning, assumes the nobler lesson of example—scenes in which distress is met with sunny spirit, poverty endured with manly courage, and labours that startle us to contemplate, cheerfully undertaken by one constitutionally indolent, in the double aim, both noble, of independence and renown.

In the multiform groups, which, at different stages of Goldsmith's life, Mr. Forster presents to our view, we have some reproach to make perhaps, especially in the later portions of the work, that he deals too summarily with certain of the great shapes he invokes, and occasionally treats, with an air too "eager and nipping," some of the political and incidental events which he rather decides than discusses. But a portrait-painter assumes a kind of prescriptive right to use the background as may best set off the figure; and

we readily confess the skill with which Mr. Forster has placed his hero in the midst of every circle, in that position he really occupied, while suggesting temperately that which was more his due. One main difference between Mr. Prior and Mr. Forster, in fine, is this,—the first gives us the facts, the last the man; the one has compiled a *mémoire pour servir*, the other has composed a discriminating and intellectual biography.

In the criticisms which Mr. Forster introduces, he betrays the subtlety of an accomplished intellect, and the sympathy of a kindred taste. And it is not a little to his praise that he has contrived to say much that is new upon 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' and to point out the graver benefits to society, the moral effect on later authors, which that delight of all ages has indirectly bequeathed. When, after quoting Dr. Primrose's unpretending boast, "that in less than a fortnight he had formed them (the felons of the gaol) into something social and humane," Mr. Forster adds, "In how many hearts may this have planted a desire which as yet had become no man's care?" we instinctively turned to the distinguished writer* to whom Mr. Forster has appropriately dedicated his book, and asked ourselves what Oliver Twist may have owed to Oliver Goldsmith.

Here, then, for all else, whether in praise or in qualification, we dismiss Mr. Forster's book to the judgment of the public—a fitting, and, we think, a permanent companion to the works of the author whose career it commemorates:—a gentle but a manly apology for the life, which it tracks through each pathetic transition of light and shadow: written in that spirit of which Goldsmith himself would have approved—pleasing while it instructs us, mild without tameness, earnest without acerbity.

* Charles Dickens.

# CHARLES LAMB

## AND SOME OF HIS COMPANIONS.

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# CHARLES LAMB

## AND SOME OF HIS COMPANIONS.

[1. *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb, consisting of unpublished Letters, with Sketches of his Companions.* By SERJEANT TALFOURD. London, 1848.

2. *Charles Lamb; a Memoir.* By BARRY CORNWALL. London, 1866.]

AMONG the modes of expression by which philosophers have sought to classify the divisions of our species, the nickname is obviously the most convenient. It condenses the tediousness of description into the tersest compactness of epigram; and finds ready acceptance with the facile ill-nature which the learned Huet assures us is the prevalent characteristic of an intelligent public. According to that venerable authority, there is nothing which men in polite society enjoy more than unflattering representations of their fellow-creatures. This, he asserts, is the main reason why Tacitus is so popular with scholars—displeasing likenesses of humanity being especially pleasant to the cultivators of humane letters.

To a certain set of writers who flourished at the earlier part of this brilliant century, and who were supposed to live in close intercourse with each other, and to have many attributes of mannerism in common, one of the wits of Edinburgh applied the unalluring denomination of the Cockney School. It was a name sufficiently significant of ridicule to frighten away bashful admirers, and had just so much of that kind of one-sided justice which belongs to satire, as not to seem to the ordinary public an unfair definition.

We know not how it is that among civilized nations England stands alone in imputing to that

development of the national intellect more peculiarly metropolitan, the defective liberality, whether in the culture of letters or in the survey of men and manners, which in other countries is rather ascribed to the denizens of provinces. Cicero finds a want of "urbanitas" in those writers who lived remote from the Roman capital, and narrowed their views of the world to the limited range of a coterie. It is praise to a French author to say that on life and manners he writes like a thoroughbred Parisian; it is the reverse of praise to an English author on such subjects to say that he writes like a thoroughbred Londoner. To him we impute exactly the same spirit of clique—the same partial estimate of himself and the privileged few with whom he lives in sympathy of taste and reciprocity of compliment, which are the alleged characteristics of a provincial genius. The Cockney is the archetype of the Londoner cast of Temple Bar, and is as grotesquely identified with the bells of Bow as Quasimodo with those of Notre Dame. In the men on whom this metropolitan distinction was conferred, including writers not less remarkable than Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and Charles Lamb, we cannot honestly affirm that there was no element of cockneyfication. Though differing much from each other in character and in direction of intellect, they agreed in this—they all so far rejected the urbanizing tendencies of a great metropolis, that they moved in as small a circle as if they had lived in a country town. In their publications they quote and praise, quarrel and make it up with each other, as if, like the Chinese, they confined the map of the civilized world to their celestial empire, and inscribed on the space left outside of the circle, "Corners of earth inhabited by barbarians." The Waverley Novels can excite no interest in Lamb: it is a matter of doubt whether he was ever seduced into reading them. Hazlitt, indeed, succumbs to their enchantment, but atones for such praise as he bestows on the fictions

by declaring that "he despises their author as the meanest of mankind." Lamb has a lofty disdain for so comparative a pigmy as Byron. Hazlitt does not openly share in that disdain, but he implies it by the sneer with which he accompanies the stinted measure of his praise. According to him, Byron "seldom gets beyond force of style," and "his poetry consists mostly of a tissue of superb commonplaces." With the contemporaneous literature of the Continent the professors of this school reject all acquaintance; among the rising generation of writers in England it is only their own Alumni whom they deem worthy of notice. Those, they regard with indiscriminate favour—equally kind to a Sheridan Knowles and a Janus Weathercock. Hunt, the least exclusive of the coterie, in vain commends Shelley and Keats to the cordial welcome of his associates. Hazlitt speaks of Keats, indeed, when Keats was dead, with a certain civility, such as a strong man compassionately bestows on a promising though sickly child. But of Shelley, in Shelley's lifetime, his criticism is that of stern contempt. According to him, Shelley "is not a poet, but a sophist, a theorist, a controversial writer in verse; he gives us for representations of things rhapsodies of words; he paints gaudy, flimsy, allegorical pictures on gauze, on the cobwebs of his own brain" (Hazlitt's 'Plain Speaker: On People of Sense')—an estimate of Shelley, from which Lamb does not greatly differ. In fact, when the chiefs of this oligarchy commend to our reverence the men of their own day, they compliment each other—Hunt praises Hazlitt, Hazlitt praises Hunt; Lamb praises both, and by both is praised. We must make one honourable exception to this exclusive co-admiration. The Cockney School acknowledged the genius of the Lake School, and paved the way to that appreciation of Wordsworth and Coleridge which the pertinacity of critics has at last wrung from the passive assent of the general public. But this so-called Cockney School

was, in much, an offshoot from the Lake School. Wordsworth and Coleridge exercised a predominant power over the minds of Hunt, Hazlitt, and Lamb, and served greatly to determine the point of view from which the two latter regarded the form and substance of contemporaneous poetic creation. And perhaps they found in the homage they rendered to the great Poets of the Lake School an excuse for the depreciation of other contemporaries more popularly admired. It is but just to the Public of that day to preface remarks intended to do equal justice to the merits of the writers referred to, with this admission of their characteristic failings; because it was but natural that the Public should hesitate before confirming the reputation which the members of a coterie so dogmatically bestowed upon each other. The Public has always a certain interest in guarding its judgments from the dictations of a critical clique.

Of the three eminent writers to whom this unlucky appellation of Cockney was popularly assigned, Hazlitt deserved it least in the literal sense of the word, and most in the symbolical. In the literal sense of the word he did not indeed deserve it at all. Hazlitt was no Londoner. By origin he was Irish; he himself a native of Shropshire. But in the symbolical sense of the word, he was the most obnoxious to the ridicule it conveyed, partly because, once identified with the set of writers to whom it was applied, he stood forth the most aggressive and the most provocative, and carrying out into the fullest display the sins attributed to the Cockney School. He of the three best answers to his own sprightly and accurate definition of Cockney: "Your true Cockney," saith Hazlitt, "is your only true leveller. Let him be as low as he will, he fancies he is as good as anybody else." The faults of Hazlitt were the more disagreeable because the man was one of those warm-blooded creatures whom we wish to like if they will but let us. And though he does his best to prevent our

liking him, it is not in his power to prevent any one who knows the English language from admiring. The admiration is uneasy, chequered, qualified, but it is admiration still. If Hazlitt lacked the poetic genius of his two gentler friends, he was gifted with an eloquence more masculine. The fibre of his brain was less fine than theirs, but it was of stronger tissue. He had in early youth cultivated his reasoning faculty with a patient study unknown to those playmates of the muse, and that faculty was sufficiently acute to have achieved no mean repute in metaphysical speculation, or in the more practical domain of judicial criticism, had it not been constantly obscured and perverted by passions fiercely combative, which, accompanied with an arrogant self-esteem, and a very limited knowledge of the world, too often deprived his judgment of value, because they robbed it of charity and candour. And it was exactly where his knowledge of the world was the most deficient that his passions and his arrogance led him to parade his defect with the loftiest ostentation. He delighted in analytical comments on the public characters of his time; and it is difficult to conceive any man of letters with so profound an ignorance, not only of the characters thus superciliously depicted, but of the estimates formed of them by persons the most competent to know. What can be more ludicrously unlike the speaking of the late Marquis Wellesley (in his most brilliant day; the date of the criticism is April 13, 1813, and on his special subject, Indian affairs) than the following attempt at description which heads the collection of Hazlitt's 'Political Essays'? "We confess those of his (Lord Wellesley's) speeches which we have heard appear to us prodigies of physical prowess and intellectual imbecility; the ardour of his natural temperament stimulating and controlling the ordinary faculties of his mind; the exuberance of his animal spirits contending with the barrenness of his genius, produce a degree of dull vivacity, of paraded

insignificance and impotent energy, which is without any parallel but itself." Who does not here see a man in love with his own style, and exulting in smart impertinences about an orator of whose attributes of mind and speaking he was ignorant as a babe unborn?

This is but one instance out of the many we might quote, not of caricature (for in caricature there is something of truth), but of utter dissimilarity between the original man and the fanciful image which the student of Titian would have us accept as a portrait. And we select this special instance, because elsewhere we might suppose the common sense of the artist distorted by private vindictiveness or political hate. But Mr. Hazlitt could never have had his feelings hurt by Lord Wellesley, nor could there have been anything calculated to stir up his gall in a speech upon our Indian Empire. Hazlitt never pretended to be a cosmopolitan reformer. No man ever ridiculed with a keener irony the affectation of universal benevolence. He cared about the Indian Empire as little as he did about Lord Wellesley. He would have resolved both into limbo for the head of any wrinkled old hag on the canvas of Rembrandt. Hurried away by a temperament thus vehemently aggressive, there was scarcely a section of opinion or a class of fellow-subjects that William Hazlitt did not, at one time or other, go out of his way to offend. A bitter politician, though without giving us the slightest idea what he would destroy, except the principle of hereditary monarchy, or what he would reconstruct, except universal suffrage; equally a fanatic against constitutional kings and for Napoleonic autocracy, he smote with the same unexpected swing of his flail Tory, Whig, Radical, Reformer, Utopianist, Benthamite, Churchman, Dissenter, Free-thinker. He believed in nothing but Hazlittism *plus* Napoleonism. There was but one Hazlitt, and Napoleon was his prophet. That which he recognised in himself was

unscrupulous force. Unscrupulous force had been crowned in Napoleon. Such amiable disciples as the late Serjeant Talfourd tell us that Hazlitt viewed in Napoleon the principle of force opposed to the legitimate Right Divine. Napoleon commenced his career not by dethroning the legitimate Right Divine, but by cannonading King Mob. And a man must know very little of Hazlitt's works who is not aware that, though he speaks of legitimate kings with the hate of a French sans-culotte, he speaks of the common people with the scorn of a Venetian oligarch. In fact, Hazlitt's judgment is so constantly coloured by his spleen, that he is scarcely more consistent in his likings than in his dislikings. Even in literature, the few contemporaries for whom at one moment he professes the deepest reverence, to whose publications he ascribes, not untruly, the deepest obligations in the forming or developing of his own intellectual powers, are addressed with the same disdainful insolence with which, perched on the wall of his small enclosure, he crows scornful defiance to such foes afar off as the Wellesleys and Cannings,—if these guides, philosophers, fathers, friends, do but exercise their liberty of thought in a way disapproved by William Hazlitt. He tells us himself of the marked kindness with which, in his earliest youth, he had been distinguished by Coleridge, and of the lasting effect on his own mind produced by his first contact with that vast and luminous intelligence :—

"I was at that time" (he says in his own picturesque and vivid diction) "dumb, inarticulate, helpless, like a worm by the way-side, crushed, bleeding, lifeless. But now, bursting from the deadly bands

'that bound them
With Styx nine times round them,'

my ideas float on winged words, and as they expand their plumes catch the golden light of other years. My soul, indeed, has remained in its original bondage, dark, obscure, with longings infinite and unsatisfied; my heart, shut up in the prison-house of this rude clay, has never found nor will it find a heart to speak to; but that my understanding also did not remain dull and

brutish, or at length found a language to express itself, I owe to Coleridge." *

One might suppose that such reminiscence would have sufficed to induce a man of feelings so warm to soften any blow which he might afterwards feel it a painful duty to inflict upon the greatest of his intellectual benefactors. To suppose this would be to misjudge William Hazlitt. The Lay Sermon of Mr. Coleridge displeases him, and he exhausts all his powers of sarcasm for expressions of contempt best fitted to cut into the heart of the sensitive man of genius, through whom his own understanding "had found a language to express itself:"—

"No one," he says, "ever yet gave Mr. Coleridge a penny for his thoughts." . . . "He is the secret Tattle of the Press. . . . . He is the dog in the manger of literature; an intellectual Marplot, who will neither let anybody else come to a conclusion nor come to one himself." . . . "He lives in the belief of a perpetual lie, and in affecting to think what he pretends to say," &c. &c.†

Nor is this ferocity of censure confined to the political articles of a newspaper, to be palliated by the hot blood of spontaneous debate. In one of his most elaborate compositions ('On the Prose Style of Poets') he compares the prose style of Coleridge "to the secondhand finery of a lady's maid:"—

"With bits of tarnished lace and worthless frippery he assumes a sweeping Oriental costume. . . . He is swelling and turgid, everlastingly aiming to be greater than his subject, filling his fancy with fumes and vapours in the pangs and throes of miraculous parturition, and bringing forth only stillbirths."

Wordsworth, whom elsewhere he exalts to the seventh heaven, he treats with the same measureless contempt when Wordsworth takes the liberty to say something which Hazlitt disapproves. Then thus doth the idolater fustigate the idol:—

"The spirit of Jacobin poetry is rank egotism. We know an instance; it is that of a person who founded a school of poetry

* Hazlitt's 'Literary Remains,' vol. ii., on 'My First Acquaintance with Poets.'

† Hazlitt's 'Political Essays:' on Coleridge's 'Lay Sermon.'

on sheer humanity, on ideal boys and mad mothers, and on Simon Lee the old huntsman. The secret of the Jacobin poetry and the anti-Jacobin politics of this writer is the same. His lyrical poetry was a cant of humanity about the commonest people, to level the great with the small; and his political poetry is a cant of loyalty, to level Bonaparte with kings and hereditary imbecility. This person admires nothing that is admirable, feels no interest in anything interesting, no grandeur in anything grand, no beauty in anything beautiful. He tolerates nothing but what he himself creates"—

and so on.

Strangely enough, after so flattering a description of Wordsworth, Hazlitt actually quarrels with Lamb because, when receiving Wordsworth at his house, he does not specially invite Hazlitt to meet him!

We do not adduce these violent breaches of that "comity" which, between those who aspire to represent the literature of nations, should form the same unwritten law which it does between nations themselves, in any spirit of undue harshness to the memory of the passionate offender; but partly because without noticing them it would be impossible to arrive at a fair critical estimate of the genius and character of William Hazlitt, and partly because they suffice for answer to the complaint made by Serjeant Talfourd and other enthusiastic partisans of this powerful writer that Hazlitt was assailed and misrepresented in his own day, ignored by dignified reviewers, or libelled by malevolent critics. How could it be supposed that much courtesy would be shown to a man who displayed so little? One does not readily make room in any decorous society for a visitor who slaps everybody's face and treads on everybody's toes. And certainly, were there not very great merits to set off against faults so grave, and which we can survey with a calmer eye now that Time has become "the beautifier of the dead," we should scarcely be tempted to rescue the writings of William Hazlitt from the neglect into which, with the mass of the reading public, they have fallen.

But amidst all these intolerant prejudices and this wild extravagance of apparent hate, there are in Hazlitt from time to time—those times not unfrequent—outbursts of sentiment scarcely surpassed among the writers of our century for tender sweetness, rapid perceptions of truth and beauty in regions of criticism then but sparingly cultured—nay, scarcely discovered—and massive fragments of such composition as no hand of ordinary strength could hew out of the unransacked mines of our native language.

Nor is it without a melancholy and softening interest that we detect sometimes, amidst the very lucubrations that most displease the taste by virulent personalities, some excuse for the writer's indulgence of hate in the sorrows of his private life, the mortifications of his literary career; and imagine that we can trace that bitterness of spirit which taints the current flow of his mind to its springs in disappointed affection and baffled aspiration. For it is one of the peculiarities in the egotism of this writer to launch into savage diatribes on the faults to which his acute self-consciousness made him aware that he was most subjected. He would insist on the virtue of courtesy, denounce the vituperation which comes from envy at another's success, call before him the phantom of his own mind, arraign it, and condemn. Surely there is something of the soured philanthropy of Alceste in the burst of wild declamation with which he concludes his ironical Essay 'On the Pleasure of Hating:'—

"Mistaken as I have been in my public and private hopes, calculating others from myself, and calculating wrong; always disappointed where I placed most reliance; the dupe of friendship and the fool of love, have I not reason to hate and despise myself? Indeed I do; and chiefly for not having hated and despised the world enough."

This is not the writing of a cynical hate, but of a passionate despair; and, unless we mistake, of such despair as is never wrung from a strong man except where the heart is constitutionally warm and the

aspirations originally noble. Such a despair the best and greatest have conceived when, walking in the Valley of Shadow, they forget that the visibility of shadow is the evidence of light.

In his Thoughts on the Intellectual Character of William Hazlitt (prefixed to his Literary Remains) Serjeant Talfourd says, with commendable brevity of distinction,—

"As an author, Mr. Hazlitt may be contemplated principally in three aspects,—as a moral and political reasoner, as an observer of character and manners, and as a critic in literature and painting." Serjeant Talfourd adds, "It is in the first character *only* that he should be followed with caution."

*Only* in the *first* character! The shade of Serjeant Talfourd must pardon us! We think that in each of the three aspects those who did not follow William Hazlitt with caution would be led into innumerable bogs and pitfalls. We have already sufficiently implied how little he is to be trusted, not only as a political reasoner, but as an observer of character. For an observer of manners apart from character he had some marked advantages in his early study of metaphysics, and his passion for connecting the outward manners of society with the inward motives of man in the abstract; nor less in a command of many varieties of style, but especially in the epigrammatic terseness which makes the excellence of the French writers upon manners. But one has only to glance over the leading features of his biography to perceive how exceedingly limited was the range permitted to his observation. The son of an Unitarian minister in a small provincial town, intended originally for the profession of a painter, relinquishing the hope of that calling, to which he was ardently attached, from the conviction that in it he could not attain to his own standard of excellence, but to the last, with eye and heart ever turning from the "full tide of life in Fleet Street," to dwell enamoured on the likenesses of humanity limned

upon canvas; thrown a stranger upon London, inexperienced and raw; forcing from "that stony-hearted mother of orphans" a diploma to practise upon "public characters," first as a newspaper reporter, and next as a newspaper contributor; in proportion as, feeling his own powers, he stormed his way onward —rather contracting than expanding his commerce with mankind—quarrelling, as he himself tells us, with the very friends he had at first made, and even those friends, for the most part, of minds bookish and eccentric as his own; selecting his favourite resort in a sequestered village inn, with half a dozen volumes of authors a century or two old; studying the humours of no class, with a fastidious refinement that shunned the vulgar, with a pride that kept him aloof from the great, it is difficult to conceive any man less adapted by circumstance and habit for the comprehensive delineation of contemporaneous manners. And it is when he attempts to vie with the Horace Walpoles and La Bruyères, when he aims his satire at polite society, and illustrates his page with such newspaper anecdotes of what passed in courts and "gilded saloons" as a wit about town would invent as a hoax, but no man about town would repeat as a truth, that with all his native elevation of intellect, all his intuitive perception of poetic grace and beauty, we are reluctantly compelled to admit that he becomes vulgar, and vulgar according to his own true analysis of the elements in vulgarity,—vulgar from affectation, the affectation of knowing intimately things which he could not possibly know at all.

His mistake was aggravated, because it was a kind of knowledge which, as a wise man, it was not necessary he should possess, but the pretence to which any fool could detect. When, in criticising Molière's great comedy, 'L'Ecole des Femmes,' he speaks of Arnolphe as the *husband* of Agnes, not many of his English readers would be sufficiently familiar with the play to perceive how hastily the critic had read

or how imperfectly he remembered it—Agnes being, of course, unmarried, and the whole comic conception of her character lost if she were a wife. But when Hazlitt parades as a matter of fact on which to ground argument or declamation some scrap of servants' hall gossip about kings and statesmen, Sir Fopling Flutter can look down on his ignorance, and Benjamin Backbite moralise on his malice. On the other hand, when, as an essayist on contemporaneous manners, Hazlitt writes from his own personal experience as observer, and in good humour with the subject selected, he can give grace and dignity to things commonplace or coarse. Of this, the essential faculty of genius, his description of the prize-fight between Hickman and Neate may suffice for example. It is with very felicitous art that he adapts to a description of one of the rudest and most violent scenes admitted into civilized life that character of style most associated with our notions of classic serenity and decorous grace. In the choice of words, in the rhythm of period and cadence, we seem to read a paper in the 'Spectator.' It reminds us both of Addison and Steele—the exquisite neatness of the one, the spirited ease of the other.

It is, however, as a critic, not of manners, but of books, of pictures, and of the stage, that Hazlitt chiefly excels; though even here we have need of all "the caution" which Serjeant Talfourd implies that we no longer require when this writer quits the ground of moral and political controversy. For, as we have before observed, Hazlitt's judgment is never so beyond the control of the mood of temper in which he writes as to keep him consistent in praise or blame. And we shall find in one passage the most direct contradictions of opinions he has advanced in another. Even in his criticism on pictures or on actors, where his mind is least disturbed by passion, he cannot demand our admiration for one of his favourites, but what he must wantonly immolate some rival renown.

If he does justice to Reynolds, he must depreciate Gainsborough; if he expatiates on the humour of Hogarth, he must deny that Wilkie has any humour at all. If he extols Kean, he must degrade Young. And because Madame Pasta was a grand actress, poor Mademoiselle Mars must be abased into an artificial machine. There is nothing more adverse to the true spirit of criticism than these invidious comparisons between persons who essentially differ. In art as in nature varieties cannot be illustrated by opposing in a hostile spirit things that are of dissimilar genus. We grant this truth at once in the objects of nature, and we sin against criticism if we do not recognise it in art. No man, if he would praise a racehorse, thinks it necessary to abuse a lion; no man who calls on us to admire the rose asks us to despise the violet; no man who invites the eye to the shimmer of the ash-leaves thinks we cannot adequately enjoy the sight unless we point a finger of scorn at the stolid repose of the cedar. But in objects of art it is the trick of commonplace critics to insist on comparisons or contrasts, not for the purpose of showing the beauty appropriate to each, but in order to make the beauty of the one a reason why there must be something deformed in the other. That Hazlitt descended to this trick was in itself enough to depose him from the highest rank of critics. Criticism stops where injustice begins. In criticisms on literature his faults of caprice and temper become much more glaring than they are in his discourses on pictorial art, and are expressed with infinitely more presumption, because with infinitely less knowledge of his subject. Not knowing a word of German, he calls Goethe's 'Faust' a mere "piece of abortive perverseness, and not to be named in a day with Marlowe's." Telling us that Ford only wrote one play either acted or worth acting, he adds, and "that would no more bear acting than Lord Byron and Goethe together could have written it."

These examples, which might be multiplied *ad nauseam*, suffice to show how little we can dispense with that caution which Serjeant Talfourd invites us to dismiss in seeking intercourse with this powerful but irregular intellect, even on its happiest ground. It is not as a guide that Hazlitt can be useful to any man. His merit is that of a companion in districts little trodden—a companion strong and hardy, who keeps our sinews in healthful strain; rough and irascible, whose temper will constantly offend us if we do not steadily preserve our own; but always animated, vivacious, brilliant in his talk; suggestive of truths, even where insisting on paradoxes; and of whom when we part company we retain impressions stamped with the crownmark of indisputable genius. We have said that Hazlitt cultivated his reasoning faculty as a metaphysician; and his earliest work, on the 'Principles of Human Action,' is a very extraordinary performance, considering the early age at which it was conceived and composed. To the abstract principle upon which it is grounded Hazlitt remained faithful to the close of his life; that principle pervades the best of his writings, colours many of their lovelier beauties, and throws a redeeming light upon many of their gloomier faults. The warmth of his heart revolted at the doctrine which traced the springs of all human virtues to an enlightened self-love. It was less with the austere disdain of a Stoic than with the cordial detestation of a lover of art, in whom romance in sentiment was inseparable from worthy conceptions of truth and nature, that he regarded that old Epicurean philosophy which, brought down to the drawing-room by Rochefoucauld and Helvetius, had of late been familiarized to the counter and adapted to the hustings by the utilitarianism, positive and political, of Jeremy Bentham. Hazlitt's work on the Principles of Human Action is intended to prove the natural disinterestedness of the human mind. Weapons in plenty against the

Epicurean system may be taken from antique armouries, repolished, and whetted anew; and we may observe, in passing, that perhaps no arguments in confutation of the philosophy of self-interest are more popularly adapted to a plain understanding than those to be found in Seneca. But Hazlitt was little acquainted with the labours of predecessors in the same cause; he conducted his argument as if it had been untouched. Where he says something that has been said before, it is in his own way, and ideas which, taken singly, had occurred to other minds, form themselves, when conceived by his, into original combinations. The fundamental principle in his metaphysical creed, that "we are naturally interested in the welfare of others, through the same way, the same motives, the same mental operations by which we naturally pursue our own;" that, in a word, benevolence is as elementary as self-love in the principles of human action, is certainly a noble and generous doctrine, and enforced by Hazlitt with all the earnestness of his vigorous and fervid nature. And it was his faith in this doctrine that not only kept him aloof from those democratic reformers who exercised prevailing influence over the more educated members of the movement party, viz., the disciples of Mill and Bentham, but directed against their school of philosophy the instincts of his heart and the bias of his tastes, as well as the convictions of his reason.

We must notice, as briefly as possible, the most ambitious of Hazlitt's numerous writings, and the one upon which he and some of his admirers most counted for enduring fame—'The Life of Napoleon.' "He lived," says the writer of the preface to that history, "to complete the 'Life of Napoleon,' and then laid down his own."

We can say little or nothing to redeem this work from the oblivion into which it has already passed. It was altogether a mistake. Whatever intellectual qualities Hazlitt possessed, they were not those of

a historian. He was naturally impatient of details; neither had he the temper nor the discipline of mind essential to comprehensive generalization. Even his proper beauties of style, when happiest, are but brilliant impertinences in historical composition. He sentimentalizes, digresses, declaims, in the wrong spirit and in the wrong place. He lacks the simplicity of a narrator. He lacks still more the impartiality of a judge. But were his History far better than it is, it could not have stood its ground against histories of the same stormy epoch and the same marvellous man written since Hazlitt's time.

It is, then, as a critic of Art in painting and in poetry that Hazlitt principally demands our admiration—demands and generally deserves, not indeed when he censures, but when he praises; when on those beauties which had so long elevated his thoughts and vivified his fancies he expatiates with all the enthusiasm of reverential love:—it is then that he deserves the eulogy bestowed on him by Leigh Hunt, and "throws a light on Art as from a painted window."

Still more than as a critic Hazlitt excels as a writer of the Essay of Sentiment; when, in the spirit of his favourite Montaigne, he abandons himself fairly to self-commune and self-confession; when he unfolds to us, with a frankness at once melancholy and genial, the record of his early impressions, and makes us partners in the joys and the griefs of genius. For in essays of this kind the self-obtrusion to which we give the name of egotism is not a fault; it is the essential quality, infusing into desultory reveries the distinct vitality of individualised being. It is in this portion of his works that the most striking instances of Hazlitt's eloquence are to be found: an eloquence which, though retaining the form of prose, approaches near enough to poetry to bring before the reader's eye "fantastic heights or hidden recesses" in the enchanted border-land. Then, worthy of the praise he bestows on his favourite Poussin, "words

start up into images, thoughts become things. He clothes a dream, a phantom, with form and colour, and the wholesome attribute of reality." (Hazlitt's 'Table-Talk,' vol. ii. On a Landscape by Nicholas Poussin.)

Hazlitt's style, when at the best, is not that of a rhetorician, but in much that of an orator. It is spontaneous, varied, and glowing, full of illustrations that are rarely superfluous embellishments of fancy, but rather arguments lighted up. For between the rhetorical and the oratorical style there is the distinction which Mr. Pugin makes in architecture between constructed ornament and ornamental construction. The first (as recently observed in this Journal*) is merely for show, and does not affect the substance of the framework if removed; but the last, as in the columns and entablature of a Grecian temple, is part and parcel of the building itself, and to remove it would be to destroy the fabric.

To pass from Hazlitt to Leigh Hunt is like passing from a rough landscape sketch by Salvator, in which, according to Coleridge, the rocks take vague likeness of the human figure, to a garden scene by Lancret, with a group seated round a fountain engaged in dining off peaches, and listening to a gentle shepherd who is playing a guitar or telling a pleasant story. Leigh Hunt is as constitutionally gay as Hazlitt is constitutionally saturnine. He has a sprightly sense of enjoyment which he communicates to readers who will give themselves up to him, take him for what he is, and not frown or pish because he is not something else. He has a feminine love for pretty ornaments, and gets together quaint little trinkets, arranged so neatly and paraded with so amiable an air that he wins our goodnature to his side. We admire as curiosities in his collection things which might seem trifles in that of a ruder man. The neatness and delicacy of his style are not achieved without some apparent affectation; but the affectation is only appa-

* 'Quarterly Review' for October, 1866, p. 443.

rent. To no writer can be more truly applied the saying attributed to Buffon—"the style is the man." A certain gracefulness in his plastic temperament made him love to associate his actual existence with small elegancies, which cheered his eye and gladdened his heart. He covers the walls of his prison-room with a trellis paper, and can imagine that he is with Ariosto in Tuscan bowers. He goes into the poetic heaven at sight of "an old-looking saucer with a handle to it." "Its little shallow circle overflows for him with the milk and honey of a thousand pleasant associations." "This," he exclaims, "is *one of the uses of having mantel-pieces!* You may often see on no very rich mantel-piece a representative body of all elements, physical and intellectual,—a shell for the sea, a stuffed bird or some feathers for the air, a curious piece of mineral for the earth, a glass of water with some flowers in it for the visible process of creation, and underneath all is the bright and ever-springing fire running up through them heavenwards, like Hope though materiality. We like to have any little curiosity of the mantel-piece kind within our reach and inspection." A reader who feels himself inclined to scorn the amiable idiosyncrasy of mind which not only delights in these small adornments of our work-day life, but calls us off from our anxious cares or our vaulting aspirations to share in its harmless delight, is not a reader fitted to appreciate the genius of Leigh Hunt. "Since trifles make the sum of human things," Hunt, with no irrational philosophy, seeks to make trifles pleasant, and with no profitless poetry to extract from them an ideal happiness. Like the butterfly described by Spenser—

"He pastures on the pleasures of each place,
Now sucking of the sap of herbe most meet,
Or of the dew which yet on them does lie,
Now in the same bathing his tender feet,
And then he percheth on some branch thereby,
To weather him and his moist wings to dry."

With a writer of so sunny a temperament it would be but a crabbed philosophy to provoke cause of serious quarrel. We cannot bring ourselves to look on Leigh Hunt in his character of rabid politician. His are not the wings that ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm—

> "Now this, now that he tasteth tenderly,
> Yet none of them he rudely doth disorder."

Nor, in recognising the general kindliness of disposition which characterised the man, are we unwilling to regard with lenity, as an exceptional aberration from his better nature, the ill-advised work on Lord Byron. And we are reconciled to this forbearance with a quieter conscience because we have reason to believe that Leigh Hunt himself sincerely regretted that he had been ever galled by a skin-deep wound to too sensitive a self-love into a breach of those hospitable laws which involve obligations upon personal honour.

Of all Leigh Hunt's writings we like best his prose essays, and of these we like best the light and varied lucubrations contained in the 'Indicator.' Than this we do not know a more agreeable book in its own way, nor one that can be read more often with renewed pleasure in re-perusal. Hunt wanted breadth of colour and strength of hand for the filling up of any large canvas, and in such attempts he lost his own peculiar merits, which consist in smoothness of tone and delicacy of finish. He tells a short story of mingled fancy and sentiment with much grace and animation. 'The Hamadryad,' in the 'Indicator,' is beautifully conceived and composed. He can illustrate with a light not indeed very large nor searching, but of "ray serene," many little nooks and corners in the mind and heart of man, many minor beauties of form and expression in the authors he loved to study. But when he attempts a five-act drama or a prose fiction in three volumes, we become aware of

his deficiencies. He has neither the art of constructing a sustained fable, nor the power of creating new characters of life-like size; above all, he wants passion, perhaps because he abounds in fancy. This last defect is transparent in 'Rimini,' a poem which has nevertheless many striking detached beauties, and, in spite of its disagreeable subject, is the best of his more ambitious works. In the same way, as a critic, he is worthy not only of praise but of study in detached observations upon what by the German Aristarchus * are called "particulars," but he seems to us somewhat feeble in his grasp of "generals." He feels sensitively, and explains with lucid eloquence the poetry which lurks in a form of expression, in an artful cadence, in a combination of melodious liquids. But we cannot grant that he has adequate comprehension of that highest form of "imperial poetry" which retains its imperishable substance even when stripped of its felicitous expressions and defrauded of its original music; that which, though subjected to the baldest translation, can never be reduced to prose, but, passing from land to land, varies its "singing robes" in each, and secures its privilege of royalty in all.

In one of his most delightful essays, entitled 'My Books,' Hunt, speaking of the great writers who were book-lovers like himself, exclaims, "How pleasant it is to reflect that all these lovers of books have themselves become books!" And after pursuing that thought through "links of sweetness long drawn out," concludes with a modest pathos, "May I hope to become the meanest of these existences?" . . . . "I should like to remain visible in this shape. The little of myself that pleases myself I could wish to be accounted worth pleasing others. I should like to survive so, were it only for the sake of those who love me in private, knowing, as I do, what a treasure is the possession of a friend's mind when he is no more."

* Hegel.

We think few can read this very lovely passage and not sympathise cordially in the wish so nobly conceived and so tenderly expressed. Something not to be replaced would be struck out of the gentler literature of our century, could the mind of Leigh Hunt cease to speak to us in a book.

Charles Lamb has been more fortunate in propitiating friends and disarming enemies than either of the contemporaries whose names are popularly associated with his own, and to whose attributes we have devoted the preceding pages. His reputation, never angrily contested, has taken a deeper root than theirs, and spreads at present over a far wider surface. He needs not, as they yet do, the aid of the critic to take his rank among standard and popular writers. For this elder brother's share of favour he is indebted partly, no doubt, to a genius singularly sweet and conciliatory, partly also to the idiosyncrasies of a personal character in moral harmony with the genius, and so uniting our love with our admiration that it pleases ourselves to praise him, and it almost becomes an act of ingratitude to blame.

Lamb is one of those rare favourites of the Graces on whom the gift of *charm* is bestowed—a gift not indeed denied to Hunt, but much more sparingly granted to him and much more alloyed in its nature—while it is almost the last attribute we can assign to the irritating and aggressive intellect of Hazlitt.

He is not without something of charm, even in those compositions in which his genius appears to the least advantage. As a Drama, 'John Woodvill' has almost every defect that a Drama can have, and it is only in very rare passages that some happiness of expression or grace of versification atones for the general tameness of the language and the dissonance of the rhythm—yet still the work leaves a pleasing impression. We are not moved by the action of the play, but we are contented to enjoy in repose and calm the contemplation of that amiable mind which

reflects itself in the current that quietly flows before us. 'Rosamond Gray' is a story which in ruder hands would have been disagreeable and painful, and, brief as it is, while aiming at the simplest form of narrative, it wants the truthfulness of incident essential to genuine simplicity. The victim meets her fate by an accident which seems highly improbable. A girl of sixteen, brought up as strictly as Rosamond Gray, does not leave her home in the depth of night without any motive stronger than a fancy that she should like to retrace the scenes through which she had walked all day with a female acquaintance, to wander amidst "lonely glens, into a lonely copse, out of the hearing of any human habitation." Or, if it be said this might possibly have happened in real life, the Natural which belongs to Art forbids the construction of a tragic story upon an impulse so exceptional, an accident so unusual. This is not the breach of a merely conventional rule in artistic narrative. It argues a want of the intuitive faculty requisite for constructing a well-told tale. Accident, as the cause of a tragic *dénouement*, is as inadmissible in narrative fiction as it is in dramatic; and the author who employs in either such an agency cannot achieve a genuine success,—a success that satisfies intellectual requirements. The punishment of the guilty man, Matravis, is an accident again: it is no consequence of his crime, it has no connection with the incidents in the story. He is wounded in a duel, with whom we know not; his wounds "are unskilfully treated," and so he dies. Other defects in the elementary requisites of "story-telling," scarcely less grave, might be pointed out in 'Rosamond Gray.' But we have said enough to show that Lamb's special genius was as little adapted to romantic narrative as it was to dramatic character and passion. Yet, with all its faults, 'Rosamond Gray' has an attraction which many a good novelist might envy, because there is in it that nameless

sweetness of sentiment which constitutes the master-spell of the author.

But neither in these departments of literature nor in those minor poems—which are rather evidences of an exquisite poetic sensibility than achievements of poetic power—did the true genius of Charles Lamb find its natural scope. It is not on these that he rests the enduring reputation of "Elia." Happily for us and for him, he found in the pages of a Magazine precisely the field best suited to exercise, without overstraining, the faculties in which he excelled. As an Essayist, following the bent of his own mind—stamping on all that he wrote the vivid impression of his own rare individuality—he gave to the varieties of mankind a new character, and left to his language a new style. As the character given was his own, so the style bequeathed was, with all its mannerism, perfectly natural to the man. It was no style invented and built up for a literary purpose. We have only to read his delightful correspondence to see that the quaint diction of "Elia" was that in which he habitually expressed himself in familiar commune with his friends. Hence, artificial though it seem at the first glance, he is much more at his ease in it than when he writes in a style more natural to other men. In the last he forfeits originality, and gains nothing to compensate in exchange. The brevity to which he was compelled by the limited space that a Magazine allots to a contributor was favourable to Lamb's peculiar genius. It forced him to concentrate his thoughts, and out of that concentration comes the pause of reflection which is propitious to felicity in wording; so that his essays are really marvellous for terseness of treatment and nicety of expression. "Elia" is never verbose, yet never incomplete. You are not wearied because he says too much, nor dissatisfied because he says too little. In this inimitable sense of proportion, this fitness of adjustment between thought and expression, the prose

of "Elia" reminds us of the verse of Horace. Nor is the Essayist without some other resemblance to the Poet; in the amenity which accompanies his satire; in his sportive view of things grave; the grave morality he deduces from things sportive; his equal sympathy for rural and for town life; his constant good fellowship and his lenient philosophy. Here, indeed, all similitude ceases: the modern essayist advances no pretension to the ancient poet's wide survey of the social varieties of mankind; to his seizure of those large and catholic types of human nature which are familiarly recognisable in every polished community, every civilized time; still less to that intense sympathy in the life and movement of the world around him which renders the utterance of his individual emotion the vivid illustration of the character and history of his age. Yet "Elia" secures a charm of his own in the very narrowness of the range to which he limits his genius. For thus the interest he creates becomes more intimate and household.

Humour in itself is among the most popular gifts of genius; amiable humour among the most lovable. The humour of Charles Lamb is at once pure and genial; it has no malice in its smile. His keenest sarcasm is but his archest pleasantry. It is not of the very highest order, because the highest order necessitates the creation of characters self-developed in the action of romance or drama. Lamb is not Cervantes nor Molière; nor could he have created a Caleb Balderstone or a Major Dalgetty. Yet, if it be not of the highest order, its delicacy places it among the rarest. A proverb has been defined to be the wisdom of many in the wit of one. There is much in the humour of Charles Lamb, and the terseness of style into which its riches are compressed, that would merit this definition of a proverb. As Scott's humour is that of a novelist, and therefore objective, so Lamb's is that of an essayist, and eminently subjective. All

that he knows or observes in the world of books or men becomes absorbed in the single life of his own mind, and is reproduced as part and parcel of Charles Lamb. If thus he does not create imaginary characters, Caleb Balderstones and Major Dalgettys, he calls up, completes, and leaves to the admiration of all time a character which, as a personification of humour, is a higher being than even Scott has imagined, viz. that of Charles Lamb himself. Nor is there in the whole world of humorous creation an image more beautiful in its combinations of mirth and pathos. In the embodiment of humour, as it actually lived amongst us in this man, there is a dignity equal to that with which Cervantes elevates our delight in his ideal creation. Quixote is not more essentially a gentleman than Lamb. How we respect his manhood while we are charmed by his gentleness! What strength in the firm resolve, during his early stage of poverty and privation, to secure inviolate that independence from debt and pecuniary obligation which is almost inseparable from the maintenance of personal honour! To effect this object, with what noble cheerfulness he makes a jest of every minor sacrifice! Nor do we know in fiction anything more touching, and yet more heroic, than the devotion with which he gives up his life from youth till age to the discharge of such a trust as the bravest nature, not made by love brave beyond the ordinary instincts of nature, could scarcely have dared to undertake. In a moment of insanity his sister stabs her mother to the heart. To use his own words in his letter to Coleridge: "I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a madhouse, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital." His father was imbecile. He alone takes care of the old man; when the old man dies, he alone takes charge of the unhappy sister.

"For her sake at the same time," says Serjeant Talfourd,

"he abandoned all thoughts of love and marriage" (all hope of "the Fairhaired," whose image yet flits here and there across his page in later years, glimpses of a bygone dream), "and with an income of scarcely more than 100*l.* a year derived from his clerkship, aided for a little while by the old aunt's small annuity, set out on the journey of life at twenty-two years of age, cheerfully with his beloved companion, endeared to him the more by her strange calamity, and the constant apprehension of a recurrence of the malady which had caused it."

We add nothing to the picture conveyed in these few words; the words suffice to show the strength and the greatness in this man's nature; they account for the reverential affection he inspired, and for that subdued and serene melancholy which rarely saddens, but often sweetens, the music of his gentle laugh. The resolve to secure pecuniary independence with which Charles Lamb commenced life, aided by the simplicity of his tastes, gradually worked out its own success. And as we glance over the record of himself and the companions most associated with his literary career, he seems to stand out as the rich man among them—the host around whom they gathered every week as welcome guests. True that the board is sufficiently Socratic, but it is pleasant to think how little the hospitality of a man of genius need cost him when he adds to "the cold joint and the foaming tankard" the eloquence and the wit not to be found at the board of Dives. Most of Lamb's familiar associates were brilliant talkers. Leigh Hunt was always animated and lively; he talked as he wrote. Hazlitt, painfully shy before strangers, was easily drawn forth by the first jest of Lamb into confident display of his singular powers of language. Godwin was considered a dull proser by these quick wits and vivid declaimers; but we are old enough to have heard Godwin talk in the society of ordinary mortals, and there he was well worth hearing, nor without a grim jocularity of sarcasm. A later guest in those symposia was the charming poet from whom so much was then expected, and whose sweet note will be more clearly

heard hereafter, when noisier singers are hushed in night: he who, himself a veteran, has just recorded the pleasant recollections of his youth, and added to the Amenities of Literature, Barry Cornwall's Reminiscences of Lamb. There, too, on rare occasions, Wordsworth might be seen and heard; but of his visits the records are brief and scanty. If somewhat in the background, still conspicuous amidst and bending over, all, we behold the vast front of Coleridge. For ever there, when absent in the body he is visible in the spirit. From his intellect Hazlitt's took light and warmth. To his imagination Hunt was indebted for his happiest illustrations of poetic art. To Lamb he was more than philosopher and poet—he was the dearest of friends, the most spiritual of teachers; and as we could form but an imperfect notion of Lamb if we abstracted from his life its intercourse with Coleridge, so we should but superficially comprehend the intellectual character of our own time, if we saw but in Coleridge, as we are commonly invited to see, a man of incompleted and desultory genius, purposing much and performing little. This erring estimate of the peculiar properties of Coleridge has been founded perhaps on his own modest self-reproaches. He could not consummate the whole of that which he designed; and he therefore speaks of himself as a painter of outlines, a sculptor of fragments. In this he did but confess that distinction between ideal excellence and practical performance which cannot fail to be inly felt by every man who unites in a high degree imagination and intellect. For though the intellect suggests to the imagination the conception of any given work, and sustains the imagination throughout the doing of it, nothing which the imagination can do quite satisfies the intellect when done. Hence, judging by the Sonnets in which he intimates his disdain of the works on which his life was spent, and by the indifference with which he left those works to

their fate among the other properties of the Globe Theatre, Shakspeare would probably have told us that he never fully wrought out that which was in him, and that we saw of his genius but outlines and fragments. Hence Descartes, the most imaginative of mathematicians, sought, at the very outset of his career, for modes to prolong human life to the age of the patriarchs, because within the limits of threescore years and ten it seemed to him impossible to accomplish more than outlines and fragments of the designs he conceived as wholes. A man of superior genius does not require critics to show him his defects; if he is to correct those defects and approach nearer to his ideal, he may need critics to reassure him as to his merits. This was not the good fortune of Coleridge. Of the men to be named in the same breath with him, some were enthusiastically lauded, some vehemently abused; Coleridge was ignored: and in those lauded and those abused, equally, through praise or censure, made famous in their time, could be distinctly traced the informing genius of the man ignored. For here we come to the special idiosyncrasy of Coleridge, and that which makes his grand life, not—as his duller disciples would attenuate it into—a dreamy abstraction, but a strong, an enduring, and a colossal entity. The distinguishing attribute of his genius is this; it was not merely original, it was originating, it penetrated the genius of others, it originated their originality—and this in ways not only so many, but so diverging and so opposed. In 'Christabel' and the 'Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner,' he originates the lyrical narrative as it afterwards expanded in 'Marmion' and the 'Siege of Corinth.' In other poems, more devoted to musical contrivance, to sensuous glow of description, to human passion chastened and spiritualised, he originates the poetry that succeeds to Scott and Byron, from Shelley and Keats to Tennyson. All that he originates, fused into other minds, becomes in

those minds original. But Coleridge's influence does not limit itself to poets, it extends to reasoners, and abides with us at this day in the thoroughfares of positive life. To comprehend, in this, the influence of Coleridge, we must contrast with it the influence of an antagonistic genius—also originating as well as original—the influence of Bentham. We remember well, in our own green college days, the effect which Bentham produced on the mind of the then rising generation. There was something captivating even to the poets—whom, still more rigidly than Plato, Bentham would have banished from his republic—in the brevity of his royal roads into political science—in the sparkle of his aphorisms—in the decision with which he trampled under foot not less the vulgar commonplaces of radical fustian than the foil and tinsel of courtly adulation; something captivating, too, even in his scholar-like wit and raciness of style, when (as in his 'Essay on Usury') Bentham himself completes his own designs, and does not, as in most of his later works, merely present the sinew and bone of his ideas to the Frankensteins who construct into a shape so portentously unhandsome the giant intended to be an improvement on the standard form of mankind. The sole great thinker of the time who, with but little direct reply to Bentham, on special points, stood opposed to him in substance and spirit, and intellectual mastery over earnest minds, was this mighty Coleridge, of whom sciolists talk as of a moon-stricken dreamer. Rich in the learning of the schools, richer still in a treasury of thought on which his own sovereign mintage is stamped, it is Coleridge who has shown how little the liberty of human reason and the requirements of human life can be pent up within the close wall-works of Bentham. On young men of genius, who, the more they are by impulse poetical, are the more, by the poetry within them, constrained to examine into "truths severe," the intellect of Cole-

ridge flashed like a ray from heaven. He did not so much furnish special weapons against a school essentially material as he fitted the reason of intellectual man, taken as a whole, to strike down the arguments which appealed to him as a material atom, confused and lost amidst a perishable conglomeration of atoms, with as little of freedom and as little of soul as an emmet at work in an ant-hill.

It would have been enough for the completeness of any individual life to have originated in the poetic and the ratiocinative forms of truth a millionth part of the ideas which owed their origin to Coleridge. It is Coleridge who first made England aware of the riches of German philosophy and German song; and in him originate whatever influences the higher spirit of German genius has exercised upon the English mind. And how much of that earnestness of aim which signalizes the clergy of the younger generation, and brings to the service of the Church a scholarship so enlarged, and an enthusiasm so chastened from sectarian bigotry, is to be traced to the new spirit which Coleridge infused into theological learning, exalting the mission of the preacher, as Fichtè exalted the vocation of the scholar! It was much, too, in that day—it would have been much in any day, for such effect, on minds hesitating between belief and disbelief, as belongs to authority and example—that the ablest and the boldest investigator of truth which the age could boast gave to revealed religion no qualified adhesion, no conventional acquiescence, but the deep-felt, clear-spoken convictions of an intellect subtler than Hume's, more eloquent than Rousseau's, more comprehensive than Voltaire's. In fact, Coleridge exerted so large an influence over so many of those minds which are in themselves reproductive, and yield in the sheaf what they receive in the germ, that if we were asked "What he had done in his life?" it might be enough to answer, "He has lived." We might almost suppress refer-

ence to his own writings, we might point to the writings of others; to recognise the true worth of that life in its vivifying power over other lives, we must, indeed, look around, but we must also look upward, searching for its traces wherever some fertile eminence, dominating the level table-land of thought, expands to a nearer sunbeam the purple of a richer vintage or the gold of an ampler harvest.

It is true that the vast effect which the genius of Coleridge has exercised on our age was not produced only by the suggestive character of his written compositions, in which, as Pliny says of Greek masterpieces of art, "more is felt than understood." Much is due to the charm and the power of his oral eloquence. He left impressions that endured through a lifetime on those who met and heard him in his more felicitous moments. So that, if he had written nothing, he would still have done much of that work which we commonly ascribe to writers. It is not absolutely necessary that a man should write in order to inspire, to harmonize, and to perpetuate ideas, out of which systems arise and schools are formed. Socrates himself wrote nothing; but "Socrates taught Xenophon and Plato." The minds of Xenophon and Plato were the works he left behind him. It is only, however, a very superior genius in whom ideas thus spontaneously cast off in familiar discourse can set into movement the genius of great writers, and wing in others the words by which those ideas are borne on through space. There is in this power something beyond even the eloquence of public orators. For it is the business of orators not so much to suggest new ideas to writers as to give warmth and force to ideas which writers have already expressed.

We have submitted to our readers these views of the peculiar genius of Coleridge, and of the large results it achieved, in order to suggest to some critic more competent than ourselves to estimate and apportion the multiform capacities of a man so munifi-

cently endowed, some slight hints for the refutation of the fallacious charge of "wasted powers" popularly urged against him.

We think that in this accusation there is a complete misconception of the real nature of Coleridge's genius, and that, obeying the customary law of genius, he actually did that which he was mentally best fitted to do.

It is true that in his visionary moments Coleridge drew up prospectuses, as it were, of vast designs never fulfilled, that he sketched maps of the El-Dorados he desired to colonize and declined to visit. But if in schemes so projected his imagination deceived his understanding, we hold it fortunate that his understanding subsequently triumphed over his imagination. For, in the fine thought of Cowley—

> "Life did never to one man allow
> Time to discover worlds and conquer too."

Any critic of sound common sense has only, first, to glance at the programmes of the works Coleridge proposed to write, and, secondly, to examine fairly the generic characteristics of the things he did write, in order to be quite sure that he *would* have wasted his powers had he seriously toiled to realize the vision in 'Kubla Khan'—

> "Reach the caverns measureless to man
> *  *  *  *  *
> And build *his* dome in air."

Of the eighteen works which Mr. Joseph Cottle says, with reproachful groan, "Mr. Coleridge intended to write, and not one of which he effected," how many are there for which we would exchange 'Kubla Khan' itself, fragment though it be? "At the top of the list," says Mr. Cottle, "appeared the word 'PANTISOCRACY, *Quarto*.'" Who much deplores the loss of that quarto? Who laments as a privation to posterity the non-completion of a 'Book on Morals

in answer to Godwin;' a 'Treatise on the Corn Laws,' or on 'The Principles of Population'? Even the only work among the eighteen that advanced somewhat beyond the land of dreams, viz. a 'Translation of the Modern Latin Poets,' in two volumes, it seems to us that Coleridge showed his good sense "in putting off." It is with a shudder that we find among these eighteen projects of prospective labour an idea of "finishing Christabel;" finishing 'Christabel' in the way in which Coleridge himself tells us he projected its finish, viz., to adapt it to the taste of the day; bring it into closer resemblance, we presume, to the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel.' What truly critical friend of Coleridge would not have implored him to desist from such design! 'Christabel' in itself is as unique and matchless as a torso of Phidian art. Who wants the torso completed "to suit the taste of the day"? It is as a fragment that 'Christabel' will be an eternal study to poets contemplating lyrical narrative. Had it been completed to vie with the 'Last Minstrel,' Coleridge would have resigned his own superiority of melody, expression, and form, for a very hazardous comparison with Scott in the construction of metrical fable attuned to the popular ear. But, groans Mr. Joseph Cottle, and many deeper-mouthed than Mr. Joseph Cottle have "barked back" the groan—"How much it is to be deplored that one whose views were so enlarged as those of Mr. Coleridge, and his conceptions so Miltonic, did not, like his great prototype (Milton), concentrate all his energies so as to produce some one august poetical work which should become the glory of his country!" As in this choragic groan may be heard a chorus of groans irrational, let us hear, from the Man of genius groaned at, his own idea of this one august poetical work on which his energies should have been concentrated, and for which, therefore, we should have lost the all over which those energies were dispersed. Coleridge himself tells us in a letter

to Cottle that which he meant by an august poetical work. He says, "I should not think of devoting less than twenty years to an epic poem; ten years to collect my materials, and warm my mind with universal science. I would be a tolerable mathematician. I would *thoroughly* understand Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Optics, and Astronomy; Botany, Metallurgy, Fossilism, Chemistry, Geology, Anatomy, Medicine; then the minds of men in all travels, voyages, and histories. So would I spend ten years; the next five in the composition of the poem, and the five last in the correction of it." Lives there a true poet or a sound-judging critic who could form any sanguine notion of an epic poem thus conceived *de omni scibili?* Robert Hall said of Dr. Kippis, "He put so many books on the top of his head that he crushed out his brains." Would the brain of mortal poet bear for ten years the weight of so many sciences, and not feel the poetry crushed out of it? Where is the chance that a man should end as a Milton who starts as a Newton? That a large flame requires a large fuel we need no philosopher to tell us. A poet who would grasp the largest form of poetry (viz. the Dramatic or the Epic) should have the largest amount of knowledge; granted. But the largest form of poetry excludes, except as auxiliary ornament, the aids of positive science. The reason is perfectly clear. Poetry is an art, and as an art it deals with types unalterable and imperishable; it deals with human nature in its cardinal passions and everlasting aspirations. But science differs from art in being essentially progressive—alterable from year to year. In hydrostatics, botany, metallurgy, medicine, all our knowledge is so capricious and transitory that an encyclopædia treating on such subjects is out of date if it be ten years old. There are no revised editions of pictures and statues and works of fiction when the mind that created them has passed from earth. The fuel required for the flame of poetry is

unquestionably knowledge—knowledge of the human heart—knowledge of passion and sorrow and joy—of aspiration and abasement—of vice and virtue—of good and evil. In Coleridge's programme of study for an epic poem all this knowledge is left out. And if we now look critically at such examples as he has left us of his practical power to construct artistic fable in the wholeness and unity of completed form, we must acknowledge it was precisely that power which he wanted, and in which no study of truth through physical science, "of men's minds through travels, voyages, and histories," and no mastery of musical language and felicitous expression, could have supplied his inherent defect. For we have his tragedies finished *ad unguem* according to his notions of tragedy; and while these elaborated performances, whatever their detached beauties, which we would rather reverentially magnify than churlishly depreciate, suffice to show that Coleridge wanted the indispensable elements of dramatic construction, they no less convincingly show that he would have failed still more in the achievement of epic. That which he lacks is not light, but fire. He has no prolonged sustainment of passion; he can delight the imagination, he cannot enthral the heart. Had he absorbed into the laboratory of his brain all the lore contained on the shelves of the British Museum and the lost library of Alexandria, it could never have been reproduced in the form of such Dramas as, no matter on what principle of art they be constructed—whether on those conceived by Shakespeare, or on those accepted by Corneille,—still hold unlettered audiences under the master-spell of pity or of terror—nor in such creations of epic fable as represent in every human community the heroic archetypes of our common race.

We see, then, no cause for regret that Coleridge did not devote twenty years of his life to manufacture "one august poetical work" out of such raw

materials as the positive sciences and books of history, voyages, and travels. Neither do we grieve with less poetical .mourners over the embryos of philosophies unborn, that Coleridge did not concentrate the rays of an intellect so widely diffused upon some new History of the Human Mind, or gather into a completed system all his lore in English divinity, and all his speculative deductions from German metaphysics.

For works necessitating a long-continued patience, habits of methodical arrangement, a clear disentanglement of the complicated skein of contradictory opinions in various sects and schools—with a constant and calm perception of the sage's own theory, and a lucid and forcible mode of rendering that theory intelligible to others—we have no reason to suppose that Coleridge had the requisite gifts. He wanted, perhaps, less the primary than the secondary qualifications which we find in the Philosopher who can put his whole mind into a single system, and put his whole system into a single book.

We must be contented to take even men of genius as they are, and recognise the fact that, if they had possessed the qualities they lack, it would have been to destroy or to neutralize the qualities they possess. It is enough for us that, with all his asserted indolence, Coleridge has left behind him so goodly an array of volumes, rich with such diversified spoils—enough that we retain in so many reminiscences of his conversation, in so large a remnant of his familiar correspondence, the adequate record of a Mind that "has enriched the blood of the world," vital in its influence through age-long generations, alike upon sage and poet,—kindling new conceptions of beauty, prompting new guesses into truth.

Goethe has been likened to a cupola lighted from below. Coleridge may rather be compared to a pharos, in which the light is placed on the summit, leaving the shadow of the tower which it crowns

stretched at length on the ground immediately below. But afar, where the ships move through ocean, the shadow is invisible, the tower itself disappears, nothing is seen but the light.

Reluctantly we close the pleasant retrospect of 'Charles Lamb and some of his Companions,' to which, first invited by Serjeant Talfourd, we have been re-attracted by the kindred genius of Mr. Procter. In his recent biography of Lamb, the Poet of 'Marcian Colonna' has revived the sense of our own obligations to himself—

> "For heavenly tunes piped through an alien flute;"*

while in his simple and touching narrative he has added much of endearing interest to our knowledge of the exquisite writer whom he loves to honour.

In listening as it were to the uttered thoughts of a spirit so gently attuned as that of "Elia," so humane, yet so elevating, the mind—

> "tired
> Of controversy where no end appears,"—

feels that sense of repose, which, to quote the words of "Elia" himself, steals over him

> "whom the Sabbath bells salute,
> Sudden; his heart awakes, his ears drink in
> The cheering music; his relenting soul
> Yearns after all the joys of social life,
> And softens with the love of human kind."

* Lamb's verses to the Author of Poems published under the name of Barry Cornwall.

# GRAY'S WORKS.

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# GRAY'S WORKS.

[*The Works of Thomas Gray.* Edited by the Rev. JOHN MITFORD. 4 vols. Pickering. London, 1837.]

ALTHOUGH Poetry be an art, it is not always, nor is it even often, that the Poet is aware of the steps by which he has passed to eminence. As springs, that supply the fountain, work under ground, so, latent and concealed are the deep and unfailing streams that gather into those reservoirs, which give delight and freshness to the world: yet, not the less for their silence and darkness have the streams flowed through countless veins and strata of the earth, in order that the waters of the fountain might sparkle in the face of day. From the hour of birth to the hour when genius breaks suddenly into fame, the education of the unconscious artist continues on its noiseless progress. The scenes that surrounded his childhood—the first incident that led the eye to observe, the reason to calculate, the heart to feel, the imagination to link together opposite associations, and from familiar materials to combine new forms—all these make an elementary tuition, more essential to the training of the poet than the conscious study of critical principles and æsthetical laws. There is, however, another species of poetical artists in whom we are better enabled to trace the process by which they have worked out their genius—men who, though not really more correct or artistical than those in whom intellect seems to spring from the very wantonness and luxuriance of the soil on which it grows, are more palpably indebted to labour and to rules for the

accomplishment of their objects — men in whom method and design are obvious and pervading, and in whose fabrics, however wonderful and original, we can detect the care that proportioned every column, the cement that connected every stone. In the last century arose two poets, though at a considerable interval from each other, in whom these opposite principles of poetical art were strongly contrasted,— Burns and Gray. We have more knowledge respecting the formation of the poetical character in Burns than we have respecting most men of powers equally great; we know by what influences he himself considered that his mind was coloured and his imagination warmed, and we find that it was from the simplest and most familiar sources that he drew at once inspiration and art. We can picture to ourselves the grave thoughtful boy thrown into shade by his livelier brother, listening to the old nurse's stories of "cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery," in which the minstrel himself recognised the "cultivation of the latent seeds." He tells us that it was "the life of Sir William Wallace," which "poured the tide of Scottish prejudice into his veins;" — The boyish pilgrimage on the fine Sabbath-day to the Leglin wood —the partner in the harvest that, at the age of sixteen, brought forth at once the feelings long gathering within, and woke poetry and love simultaneously —the convivial meetings with smugglers on the coast of Kirkoswald—all these were the academical degrees through which Burns passed to the master-rank. His enthusiasm, his passions, his contemplative mind, his active physical organization, all contributed to the healthful animation which forms the charm of his works, and which, like the vital principle itself, not only gives to the material forms warmth and glow, but endows them also with symmetry, order, the poise and mechanism of power and motion, and all that makes poetry the art of nature, as "nature is

the art of God." We know, indeed, nothing more of the secrets by which enthusiasm begot skill, by which tales of Sir William Wallace passed, in the eternal metempsychosis of the Creative Mind into the ode of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled;"—by which passion, indignation, and regret could convert their bitterness into feelings so true expressed in melodies so artful as those embodied in his Poem to his Illegitimate Child, and in the manly pathos of his Lament. We know how the susceptibilities were awakened, but we cannot tell how they grew into poetry—we know, when the seed was sown, that the soil and the sun were favourable, but we cannot say by what changes in the hidden laboratory the seed broke into the blade and the blade ripened into the harvest. Why enthusiasm should make one man a missionary, another man a soldier, and a third a poet, must ever remain a mystery, which neither Helvetius nor Spurzheim can explain. Burns, though conscious of the influences which formed him into a poet, was unable to tell how he trained his genius into art, yet *an artist* he indisputably was, and it is astonishing how marvellously correct, both in details and as wholes, most of his writings are. He is one of the most correct poets that the world has known. In his smallest pieces the conception is thoroughly carried out; in his easiest lines there is never a word too much nor too little; his simplicity has in it the best characteristics of Grecian art. He is a poet for critics, and those songs which seem to gush so spontaneously from the fervid heart of the writer would furnish the severest lecturer with his happiest illustrations of classical concinnity and completeness. That Burns was a great genius every one knows, but the world has been too apt to consider him, as the world once held Shakspeare, to be somewhat rude and careless, and his energy is more conceded than his skill. Yet, if a judicious reader were to take the trouble of comparing some of the most familiar of his stanzas with

the most elaborate lines of the polished Pope, or the fastidious Gray, it would be found that the merit of superior correctness would, in nine casès out of ten, be awarded to Burns. Gray is, indeed, one of the most inaccurate, precisely because one of the most artificial of poets. Of this the melodious opening of his greatest and most careful poem affords an example :—

> " The curfew *tolls* the knoll of parting day,
> The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea;
> The ploughman *homeward plods his weary way,*
> And leaves the world to *darkness and to me.*
> *Now fades the glimmering landscape,*" &c.

That we may not appear hypercritical for the sake of our own argument, we will borrow, with some abridgment, the shrewd and sound observations that we find in the edition we now review. (Appendix cxi.) The curfew tolls—1st. The word *toll* is not the appropriate verb—the curfew-bell was not a slow bell tolling for the dead; 2ndly. Long before the curfew tolled the ploughman *had* wended his way homeward; 3rdly. The day was not *parting*, when the curfew tolled it had long since *parted*; 4thly. If the world were left to darkness in one line, how happens it, first, that in the very next line—" the *glimmering* landscape fades "? and, secondly, that we are almost immediately afterwards told that the moping owl is complaining to the moon? These are not mere verbal criticisms;—they are proofs that the writer is incorrect in his whole picture; because he does not portray what he is seeing, or has seen; he is heaping together incongruous images about evening, collected from books, and compiled in a study. The incorrectness is equally perceptible in the whole as in the details. In many other lines of this Elegy (the beauties of which are, nevertheless, as indisputable as they are striking), similar inaccuracies abound, more or less venial in proportion as they are faults only in the expression, such as the barbarism—

> " Busy housewife *ply* her evening *care*;"

or the tautology of—

> "For them no more the *blazing* hearth shall *burn*;"

or as they are faults in the truth of the image and the thought, such as those we have touched upon in the opening stanza. And this, the characteristic fault of the fastidious Gray, had its origin in his seeking The Correct in a wrong source,—not drawing it from practical and actual *observation*, but from verbal rules, and often from graceful imitations of ancient poets. It was but rarely that Gray followed Sir Philip Sidney's advice, to "look in his heart and write."

But in Burns, inferior as was his education, imperfect his knowledge of the square and measure of the architects of verse, the wording is accurate, the picture complete, because, faithful to nature and to truth, he is uttering simply what he has observed, or expressing passionately what he has felt;—and criticism dies without a sign upon his descriptions of nature, or his revelations of sentiment.

In fact, as moral error consists partly in viewing only a portion of the truth, partly in want of faith as to the rest of the truth that it cannot discover, so incorrectness, which is the moral error of the poet, arises from a meagre experience, or from a lukewarm imagination. Hence that poet is, in the proper and scientific sense of the word, the most *correct* who combines the greatest acuteness of actual observation with the most vivifying power of creative enthusiasm.

Yet Gray was a great poet, though his faults lie precisely in the quarter whence his merits have been vulgarly drawn. He was not an accurate writer, and, in the larger and purer sense of the epithet, he was not a classical one; he was not classical, for he had neither the faith, the simplicity, nor the independent originality which constitute the characteristics of the poets of Greece. Learned he was, but the

classical poets were not learned. Pindar's rapture never lived in the lyre of Gray, for Gray never knew what the rapture of poesy is. Painfully and minutely laborious, diffident of his own powers, weighing words in a balance, borrowing a thought here, and a phrase there, Gray wrote English as he wrote Latin. It was a dead language to him, in which he sought to acquire an elegant proficiency by using only the epithets and the phrases rendered orthodox by the best models. But he was no vulgar plagiarist—his very deficiency of invention became productive of a beauty peculiarly his own, and created a kind of poetry of association; so that in reading Gray we are ever haunted with a delightful and vague reminiscence of the objects of a former admiration or love, as early things and thoughts that are recalled to us by some exquisite air of music, and in some place most congenial to dreamlike recollections of grace and beauty.

"If we glance over the Ode to Spring," the Rosy-bosomed Hours bring us back to Homer and Milton, "to paint the purple year" is a literal translation from the Pervig. Vener. v. 13 (*purpurantem pingit annum*)—the thought itself on which the ode turns Gray allows to have been borrowed from Green. But in these contributions, levied from all lands, the excellence of Gray is felicitously displayed. That excellence was an admirable delicacy of taste; the ear of his mind was exquisitely attuned; all the notes he borrows he connects into perfect concord with each other;—and thought and rhyme are equally harmonious. His poems are like cabinets of curious and costly gems—the gems have been polished often by hands long mouldered into dust, and have glittered in the coronals of many a foreign muse, but it is for the first time that they have been so artfully disposed in one collection,—so well selected, so skilfully displayed. But still it will be observed, that this dependence on the treasures of others, this recourse to memory and to research, invariably drew

the poet's attention from Nature herself. Thus, in the Ode to Spring, it is *not* spring that Gray describes. Let us examine :—

> "Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
> A broader, browner shade ; . . .
> *     *     *     *
> Still is the toiling hand of Care,
>   The panting herds repose ;
> Yet hark ! how thro' the peopled air
>   The busy murmur glows !"—

—"the insect youth" that "float amid the liquid noon," or "show their gaily-gilded trim, quick glancing to the sun ;" these thoughts and lines depict, in our climate at least, the summer and not the spring. If Gray had thrown aside his commonplace books, taken a stroll through the fields in April or May, and allowed the fields to dictate to him, we should have lost perhaps a thousand beauties of expression, but we should have had a poem more consistent with the truth.

But though in things external Gray is not an accurate painter, because, either not a close observer of nature herself, or, what is more likely, not a faithful translator of what he had observed,—yet in those veins of sentiment and thought that streak with such beauty the composition of his poems, he is usually original and truthful. The *reflections* in his celebrated Elegy—the sweet and tender pathos of the sentiment that pervades the Ode to Eton College—are drawn from deep and sincere springs. It is one characteristic indeed of Gray, that he embodies thoughts the most simple in a style the most artificial.

As life itself is a constant school to all of us, so it is to his mode and habits of life that we must look for the distinguishing peculiarities of the author of the Elegy in a Country Churchyard. An accomplished, secluded, half-unsocial scholar—living for the most part in the learned cloisters of a college—slowly and indolently acquiring vast stores of grace-

ful learning—his taste was naturally more cultivated than his imagination or his passions. It requires something of the bustle and stir of active existence to make a man lean firmly on his own powers, and to call into vivid reality the faculties that observe, imagine, and invent. But Gray, surrounded by men yet more idle than himself—remote from the emulation and excitement of the Republic of Letters—rather filled up his solitary leisure with conceptions of what might be done, than resolutions of what to do:—

> "Ten thousand great ideas filled his mind,
> But with the clouds they fled and left no trace behind."

Always drawing in new stores, his mind became overladen with its own wealth, and over-refined and painfully fastidious, from the models which were perpetually before him. Too much honey clogged his wings. Thus made indolent and inert—and the materials and powers within him not being kept vigorous and active by any stimulus from the fierce objects of real life,—when he sate down to compose it was rather to arrange into a new and brilliant shape the expressions, the phrases, the curious felicities of words which he had noted in his memory, than from the yearning of more active poets to vent an oppressive emotion, or fix into immortal being ideal aspirations and haunting visions. It is singular to observe how frequently the conventual life of colleges produces the same effect upon the mind. It is the air of the Castle of Indolence that enervates even the activity of thought:—

> "A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,
> No living wight could work, ne cared even for play."

In complete and total solitude, if not continued too long, we are often so driven upon ourselves, that out of leisure we beget excitement; and our own thoughts so oppress us, that we must throw them off by a constant exertion. In total solitude we grow egotists, and egotism ever longs for a confessional. But this

is not the case with the half-solitude of the college and the monastery. There, we have just enough of society to make us indolent, just enough of solitude to make us dreamers. Those around us have grown reconciled to the routine of habit—the ablest and the most erudite are satisfied with the reputation of their monotonous circle—ambition is but a languid desire—there is little opportunity to rise—there is no fear to fall. Poverty does not sharpen the faculties—the hope of wealth does not excite the passions. Young men who, as undergraduates, gave the most brilliant promise—consumed nights in toil—and renounced health, pleasure, all the gold of youth itself—in the desire of a scholarship or a medal, become fellows and residents—and emulation seems prostrate and exhausted. They made a mighty effort in order to be still for ever. The influence of such a society is wonderfully contagious—and especially with a man like Gray, whom books amused rather than excited, and whose fastidiousness made him more fearful of failure than sanguine of success. This considered, it is almost surprising that Gray designed, and even that he did, so much, out of the beaten track of his existence. And perhaps the slight stimulus and energy that remained with him, and occasionally stirred his genius into painful action, were the result of circumstances peculiar to himself in the earlier part of his life. Maintained at the University by the exertions of his mother, that very thought may have inspired the son with the proud wish to repay her sacrifices by distinction. His travels with Horace Walpole—perhaps his companionship with that sharp and acute observer—may have served to ripen such seeds of energy as all the tares of after-sloth could not utterly choke. If, on his return to England, he had fulfilled his original purpose of selecting the legal profession, the forced stimulus of metropolitan life—its daily and hourly demands upon emulation—the fever it keeps up, fiercest in the most sensitive frames, might

have necessarily urged the shy proud man into the full exercise of those powers which, even in their partial exercise, were destined to attain to one of the most eminent among the ranks of poetry; for, in proportion to the pride and the reserve of a man of genius, does he require a call, a demand, a stretch upon his faculties. But the fates otherwise decreed. Gray went to Cambridge; and six years of his prime were devoted to reading Greek!

Gray's odes, like those of Collins, were not popular at first. An edition of a thousand copies seems to have disappeared but slowly. His Elegy, as is well known, spoke at once to the heart of the multitude, and, at its very birth, it received the stamp of immortality. The reason perhaps of the different reception accorded to these different species of poetry, is to be found in a distinction carefully to be noted. Works that address the common and household feelings—the emotions—the heart—are brought to a speedy and universal test. If not popular at first (supposing that they come fairly before the public), the chances are, that popular they will never be; like orations to a multitude, their merit consists in their adaptation to an audience that, in its main essentials, is always the same. Hence novels that either excel in pathos or in domestic interest spring at once into fame; and novels once famous rarely die. We do not say as much for romances, which are often but fantastic exaggerations of a caprice in the public mind. 'Clelia' was as popular at one time as the everlasting 'Clarissa' at another. But works that address the taste, the reason, or the mere fancy (that pale reflection of the imagination), are necessarily slow in their progress; because for these works judges are more rare, and every man cannot test their merits—they depend upon the few—they are made or unmade by critics—they do not fill the atmosphere with a familiar though sudden light, but are as torches handed from place to place by the Initiated, until the illumination becomes general.

The ode of modern times, compared with its great Greek original, must ever want something of its proper vitality. There was but one age in which the grander species of lyrical poetry flourished in its full vigour: the age that preceded the Drama. It was then itself a kind of drama, inseparably connected with music; not read, but represented before a mighty audience, on solemn occasions, dedicated to themes of national interest and exciting universal enthusiasm. The poetry of the ode had, therefore, essential accompaniments in music, and in a half-developed form of histrionic exhibition. It ceased in Greece as it became merged in the choral songs of the drama which it had served to create. Still, the ode of modern poetry will always be more true to its generical character in proportion as it retains its earliest connection with the lyre, and gives musical expression to such sentiments as are the most readily awakened in a mixed and popular audience. Hence a national hymn is perhaps the nearest approach to the ancient ode; and the 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' the 'Mariners of England,' the 'Marseillaise Hymn,'—even 'God save the King,' and 'Henri Quatre,'—have in them more of the true spirit of the classic lyrists than the scholastic poems of Ogilvie, the formal choruses of Mason, or even the elaborate compositions of Gray. But whatever may be disputable as to the precise degree of merit due to Gray's odes, regarded merely in the lyrical character they assume,—as poems of exquisite harmony, splendid diction, and picturesque imagery, they must rank among the most fascinating productions in the language. *Picturesque*, indeed, is the proper epithet to apply to the genius of Gray. His poetry opens, in every winding of its involved sweetness, to such images and prospects as should serve to kindle the sister art. More than any writer of his age, he made words the paintings of things. Like Young, he seeks the attainment of this object by per-

sonifications carried to a faulty excess;—personifications that present but confused notions, and are productive but of false glitter; thus, he cannot speak of hope, but it is "Gay Hope by Fancy fed." Not only Health is personified as of "rosy hue," but Cheer also is raised to a rank in mythology, and "of Vigour born." These unnecessary elevations of commonplace words tend to destroy the effect of the more worthy and noble personifications (immediately following) of the fury Passions and the painful Family of Death. Where every line raises an abstract thought into a mythical being, sufficient boldness of relief cannot be given to those ideas of such inborn warmth and life as, without an effort, become personifications. In the 'Progress of Poetry' there is scarcely a line that does not contain an abuse of that poetic licence which renders the style animated if sparingly exercised;—frigid if lavishly indulged. We could readily picture to ourselves the rosy crowned Loves, even antic Sport and blue-eyed Pleasures, if we were not overtasked by being also called upon to believe in the actual incarnation of the "Shell:" who again is Parent of "Airs," and whom "the Voice and Dance obey." Thus are confused together those ideas which naturally represent persons, such as the Loves and Idalia, and those ideas, such as an instrument of music, to which no personification ever can be attached. Even the gorgeous and justly celebrated description of Cytherea herself is greatly injured by this obtrusive impertinence. We go with the poet while he tells us,—

> "Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay;"—

we see the dream of Praxiteles embodied when we are told how,

> "With arms sublime that float upon the air,
> In gliding state she wins her easy way;"—

but the picture is suddenly lost, the vitality of the creation fades away, and we find but a show of words before us, when we are told that

"O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom move
The bloom of young Desire, and purple light of Love."

Here Desire and Love being also personified, merely to express the goddess's complexion, the unity of the main personification of the Goddess herself is destroyed. What we took for the true Florimel changes into the false one, and the glow and motion of life melt into the shape of snow. We have the less reluctantly taken on ourselves the ungracious task of noting these faults in a great poet, because their very glitter blinds the young whom it dazzles, and conduces to imitations at variance with all pure taste and genuine feeling. Although we maintain that Gray's odes are not conceived in the true spirit of the national lyric, and although, even as poems, they are not without great faults, yet we cannot agree with the editor of the volumes before us, and with some other critics, that Gray would have found a more felicitous range for his genius in didactic poetry. In his fragment on Education and Government, he seems to us to lose all those distinctions which impart to his odes, however borrowed in details, an original stamp and impress when viewed as wholes. In this fragment his style languishes under the influence of Pope. The thoughts are battered out into thin tautologies. Such as

"those kindly cares
That health and vigour to the soul impart,
Spread the young thought, and warm the opening heart."

The incorrectness of his phraseology and metaphors becomes also more evident in the close confines of the heroic metre: for instance,—

"What wonder, in the sultry climes that spread
Where Nile, redundant o'er his summer bed,
From his broad bosom life and verdure flings,
And broods o'er Egypt with his watery wings,
If, with adventurous oar and ready sail,
The dusky people drive before the gale?"

Here the people are *sailing* through something that we were told, in the two lines immediately preceding, was *brooding over* the land with "watery wings;" the Nile as a person, and the Nile as a river, being both before us in the same sentence and in utterly opposite senses. These faults do not appear to us redeemed by any great vigour of thought or largeness of conception in the subject and opening of the poem itself. And we very much doubt whether, with all his learning, Gray had sufficient grasp of mind, or sufficient confidence in his own originality and depth, for a great philosophical poem.

The character of Gray's poetry, to a certain extent, pervades his correspondence. It is true, as we shall again notice before we conclude this article, that his *style* in prose was essentially different from his style in verse; yet in both there is the same fastidious mind—the same curious and varied learning, accompanied by that happy and elegant neatness of humour in which his lighter poems excel. We think that his correspondence is also stamped by the main defect of his poetry—it wants *heartiness*. It would be unfair to say of a man to whom national gratitude is due, and whose secret nature we can do no more than conjecture, that he lacked warmth of heart; yet that warmth is not visible where we would look for it most. To the letters of his early friend, West, which are often so beautifully touching—letters full of the inexpressive yearnings—the aching desires—the morbid yet gentle infirmities of the poetical temperament—his replies seem dry and unsympathizing. Even when poor West, condemned to a death too early for himself, and perhaps for the world, writes of the cough "that will go on, shaking and tearing me for half an hour together;" and when, in that melancholy play with disease, which has so much pathos in its humour, the young poet sends him those painful Latin verses on his malady, beginning with

"Ante omnes morbos importunissima tussis," &c.,—

Gray's jesting answer, "You are the first who ever made a muse of a cough," jars strangely upon the moral taste. When Gray writes to Wharton that his aunt had had a stroke of the palsy, he dismisses the complaint in a line or two, and hurries on to gossip about Lady Swinburne—Grapes—Evelyn on Forest Trees—Oats, Barley, and Beans. In another letter to Mason (alluding to the will of the deceased, who left him joint executor with another of his aunts) he wittily says, "He has been dividing nothing with an old woman." Nay, when the mother whom he seems really to have loved better than anything else in the world, and to whom he was so deeply indebted, expires, he says shortly and drily to Wharton, "My poor mother, after a long and painful struggle for life, expired on Sunday morning; when I have seen her buried I shall come to London, and it will be a particular satisfaction to me to find you there. If you can procure me a tolerable lodging near you," &c.

Whatever affections Gray possessed, they do not seem to gush forth vividly and freely. And we suspect that it was this moral torpor or frigidity which chilled the current of his poetical fancy, and makes us feel, even in his most elaborate and fervid splendours of diction, a certain want of the fire of human passion, and the impatient eloquence of genuine emotion. There is indeed always something wanting to inspiration—something stinted in genius—wherever we cannot discover an acute susceptibility to the affections. Yet, so curiously constituted are we human beings, that it was from, perhaps, this deficiency, that Gray derived many of the excellences of his character—his calm of temper, so free from the irritability and jealousies of the literary commonwealth — his [illegible]hical spirit of independence (the offspring of his indifference to the common but passionate objects for which men barter away their freedom of will)—the stately, yet not hypocritical, decorum of morals to

which the lively worldliness of Walpole was unable to mould itself. In the even balance of all his emotions Gray preserved himself from every vice;—virtuous generally, inasmuch as he carried no one virtue into a passion. Ambition never allured, Pleasure never intoxicated, Love never engrossed him. His inspiration, as we before said, was a highly cultivated taste operating on a most harmonious ear. It must, however, be observed, while we are on the subject of his taste, that, though his judgment upon ancient literature was most felicitous, refined, and just, he failed lamentably in a right appreciation of his contemporaries: While he expresses an admiration that does for once carry him into enthusiasm for the hollow rant of Ossian, he speaks with the utmost contempt of the *talent* of the 'Nouvelle Heloise.' Of Collins, his rival, he says, "that he deserved to last some years, but will not." Of 'Joseph Andrews,' he observes, "that the incidents are ill-laid and without invention, but the characters have a great deal of nature." And "Parson Adams is *perfectly well!*" He evidently rates that wonderful fiction very little above the run of novels, and hurries away with complacent preference to Marivaux and Crebillon. He thinks David Hume "continued all his days an infant, but had unhappily been taught to read and write." He considers Voltaire only showed genius in his dramas. This want of the "prophetic eye" as to contemporaries is the more remarkable, as Gray appears particularly free from jealousy. After all, Dr. Johnson has been hardly treated for his criticism on our author, for the Doctor never spoke so disparagingly of Gray as Gray himself spoke of the most illustrious books and men of his own time. It was as if the vast quantity of ancient furniture which the Poet had collected together, and skilfully arranged in his memory, prevented the intrusion of anything new from being received with welcome. He had formed his mind as his friend Walpole formed his

castle of Twickenham, only for the museum of a particular class of antiques and curiosities. Although there is no such thing, perhaps, as too much *knowledge*, there certainly is such a thing as too much *reading*, especially when the reading is not made a part of a system, or conducive to some definitive object. It is like crowding the memory with problems from which no new corollary is to be deduced. Gray read till it became a mechanical habit with him indolently to take in learning—which, from the want of vigorous habits of writing, was never fairly digested into knowledge.—With all his accomplishments in classical lore, in history, heraldry, antiquities, architecture, botany, &c., there was no subject which he seems to have known thoroughly, or from which he strikes new results. He acquired rather than studied. He contemplated rather than thought.

Gray's *style* in prose, as exhibited in his correspondence, is confessedly delightful. Though somewhat quaint, it is an easy quaintness. He was infinitely more natural in prose than verse. Horace Walpole lets us into the secret of this. "Gray," says that piercing reader of such characters as came within the scope of his actual observation, "*never wrote anything easily but things of humour;*"—and humour, his natural gift, is the characteristic of his correspondence. If not the best letter-writer in the language, he is the best letter-writer of all the professed *scholars*. Addison himself does not more happily combine humour with elegance; nor can even Walpole throw a more intellectual grace over familiar trifles.

Besides whatever other causes might contribute to Gray's artificial construction in poetry, one is to be found, perhaps, in the fashion of the time. As each age of eminent writers usually proves its emancipation from the prescriptive shackles of the last, by a total contrast of manner and style, so the concise and easy fluency of Addison, Swift, and Steele, and the spontaneous and unsought nobleness, the *senatorius*

*decor*, of Bolingbroke's diction were, in the early part of the reign of George III., forsaken by authors of great influence and renown, for a phraseology and mode of expression eminently artificial. Words were built up into palaces, no matter how commonplace the thought that was to inhabit them. Johnson, Gibbon, Junius, even Burke (though less systematically), seem to have avoided, as a rock, the periods and expressions into which the English language would naturally fall in conversation. Criticism as well as authorship, in that day, occupied itself with exclusive care to these *verborum minutiæ*. Whatever critical review then existent we look into, we find two words given to the thought of the author and fifty to his style. It was a matter of grave dispute, not only by Gray and his correspondents, but by the commonest Scaligers of a periodical, whether antiquated words are to be admitted into modern poems—whether such and such epithets have been used by the best authors—whether the rhymes of "obscure" and "poor" be not a serious objection to a whole poem—with a hundred other frivolities—the topknots and patches of the muse. Criticism itself was never (scarcely even in our own day) so unconscious of its own great principles. Gray, whose prose writings were almost wholly confined to epistles, could not have exercised in that province, from which not even critics could pretend to banish the only appropriate charm of the Familiar, the new ideas of art that flourished amongst the eloquent and learned. He, therefore, poured the contemporaneous spirit of prose into verse, which was the sole form of composition he took up as an art. In this, to a certain degree, Young, Akenside, and Thomson were his rivals. But Gray, from labour and research, surpassed them all in artificial pomp and rhetorical melodies.

As is more often the case than the worl dsupposes, in Gray the man and the poet appear in perfect

harmony with each other — the whole being was graceful, fastidious, painstaking, and artificial. We see the poet in the fair stiff character of the handwriting, in the neatness of dress, precise "even to a degree of finicalness and effeminacy," in the grave formality of mien and manner; and even, if we might venture on a poor joke, there is something characteristic of the author in his aversion to *fire*. We can readily believe that, when at his ease, his natural vein of humour broke forth, and that he was a charming companion, too widely accomplished to be a pedant; as readily can we understand that, with the high-born and uncongenial Walpole, the proud scholar was the "worst company in the world"—"so circumspect in his language, that it seemed unnatural though it was only pure English!" The commonest traits recorded of his habits are characteristic: even to the flowers arranged in his windows and about his room, and the extraordinary exactness and order of "his books, papers, and all his chattels." He is said, somewhere, never to have been on horseback in his life. We can believe it. There was something too rudely vigorous in that hearty exercise to suit with our notions of the "formal, plump person," the delicate features, and the "too much dignity" of the man.

The influence of Gray's poetry has not passed away, though it be not very visibly traced. It is true that Runic Odes and Elegies on Ruins no longer fill our magazines; but the spirit survives the form in which it breathed. Gray was the first to pay elaborate attention to the glitter of epithets and the ornate and overburthened richness of diction. We may detect his influence wherever we now find these characteristics. We look round in vain for inheritors of the simple graces of Goldsmith, but Gray lives again in that wide host of bards who seem to think of the Muse as peasants think of the Queen,

that she cannot walk in the garden without a crown and sceptre—"with gems on all her fingers and rings on all her toes!"

Perhaps in that reaction of taste reserved for some succeeding generation it will be discovered how much the glare of diction—the profuse pomp of each individual line—mar the effect and unity of a poem; how much they tend to break up the whole work into glittering fragments, and how much the strength and simplicity of passion are enfeebled by an excess of vocabular decoration.

Gray lamented, at the close of his life, that he had done so little in literature. He had done enough to secure immortality, and, so far as vanity and pride could administer consolations to indolence, he had therefore no cause for regret. But, coupling the expression of that complaint with the association of the time when it was uttered, and when his feet were on the threshold of

"The warm precincts of the cheerful day,"

we incline to hope that he thought rather of his species than himself—rather of stores of instruction and delight lost for ever to the world, than of additional laurels to an imperishable name. That he had done so little, as we before said, we do not wonder, viewing his mode of life, his diffidence of his powers, and, above all, the lukewarm character of those passions which are at once the nerves and pulses of the soul. In more busy and exciting life, in which the energies might have been strained, the affections kept in exercise, and solitary genius and human interests have been brought into closer connexion, Gray might have been not what shallow moralists would consider a more virtuous or a more blameless man, but one who would have left far larger legacies to mankind. We might not have gazed with cold approval on the same calm regularity of life; we might have recognised

more errors, but we might have received more benefits. When we avoid the temptations of active life and a stirring career, no error may be detected in us, yet we are less really virtuous than men in whom many errors are visible, but by whom a greater number of temptations have been resisted, and in whom virtues have produced wider and more social results. He who is deeply impressed either with the holiness of a cause, or the value of the truths he preaches to mankind, is not of that sober but unsound philosophy which keeps him free from the disputes and contests of his kind. Those from whom the world derives most are usually men of strong passions and large social sympathies—the passions and the sympathies lead them into many errors, and call out all, whether of good or evil, that the genial warmth of their human nature can conceive; but we must take the evil with the good, nor quarrel with the winds that make the life and freshness of the intellect, though they sometimes produce a storm. It is not only the philosopher of whom it may be justly said, that, had he not erred, he would have done less (*si non errasset fecerat ille minus*)—the same must be often said of patriots, reformers, poets. Where we have most to be grateful for, there we have often most to forgive. This consideration may induce us to forgive the error, not for the sake of the error, but for the sake of the counterbalancing virtue.

Still, while the world fastens with delighted avidity upon the occasional infirmities or excesses of men whose crests shone in every field, whose barks ploughed every sea, in which a glory could be won or a truth discovered for their species,—while it condemns them for the very heat and force of the nature which kindled and produced so much,—we must not wonder at the comparative indolence of genius grown an egotist—of literature preferring the cloister to the crowd;—we must not wonder that

the prudent should shrink from earning the racks of an inquisition as a consequence of discoveries in truth, and hug themselves in the security of that applause which awaits an intellect that, suppressing passion, is contented to obtain renown with the fewest possible indiscretions and the smallest possible service to mankind.

# SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

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*Sir Thomas Browne's Works, including his Life and Correspondence.* Edited by SIMON WILKIN, F.L.S. 4 vols. 8vo. London, 1836.

THE name of Sir Thomas Browne is one of considerable importance in the history of English literature. His writings made a strong impression on his own time, and they still command, among all who turn for inspiration and delight to our earlier authors, a vivid admiration. Johnson has been his biographer; Coleridge and Hazlitt his critics; but we are yet without any dispassionate estimate of his works, or any clear analysis of the texture and character of his mind. The hard sense of Johnson was not calculated to enter into the visionary and ecstatic enthusiasm of the Knight of Norwich; nor did his critical canons furnish him with an adequate rule whereby to test a philosophy that had nothing of the severity of logic, or a style which did not derive its singular beauties from the methodical correctness of its arrangement, or the regular cadence of its periods. Johnson never once appears to be alive to the *poetry* of Browne, whether as exhibited in his diction or his thoughts. He never examines, much less accounts for, the startling phenomena of an intellect that reconciled so many extremes—in some things so devout, in others so sceptical. The sturdy rejector of vulgar errors was yet the credulous believer in witchcraft; and the philosopher, who "had of the earth such a minute and exact geographical knowledge, as if he had been by Divine Providence ordained surveyor-general of the whole terrestrial

orb,"* could pause amidst his gravest chapters to notice the old story in Ælian about Æschylus and the eagle, as an argument against the system of Copernicus.† Johnson acknowledges Browne to have been a very eminent man; but it is principally to his erudition that the homage is rendered. Of his style the author of Rasselas says, "It strikes but does not please . . . His tropes are harsh, and his combinations uncouth." The Doctor allows that he has "great excellences," as well as "great faults." But what these excellences are, is very unsatisfactorily explained by antitheses applied principally to mere diction; or by praises like the following:—"His innovations are sometimes pleasing, and his temerities happy." And when the Doctor very sensibly observes that "it is on his own writings that Browne is to depend for the esteem of posterity," we are scarcely prepared for this saving sentence—"of which he will not easily be deprived while *learning* shall have any reverence among men." Learning Browne certainly had—learning vast and varied. But his learning forms a very small part of his claims to the attention of posterity; and, had he only that merit to depend upon, we suspect that Mr. Wilkin would not have employed nearly twelve years of his life on the present edition of Browne's works, nor ourselves have willingly devoted twelve pages to his memory. A reader even superficially acquainted with Sir Thomas Browne, will be amused to perceive the uneasy pains with which the grave lexicographer endeavours to tame down the wild and eccentric subject upon which he has fallen, to his own level

* 'Some Minutes for the Life of Sir Thomas Browne.' By John Whitefoot, M.A., reprinted in Johnson's Life.

† "It is no small disparagement unto baldness, if it be true what is related by Ælian concerning Æschylus, whose bald pate was mistaken for a rock, and so was brained by a tortoise which an eagle let fall on it. Some men, critically disposed, would from hence confute the opinion of Copernicus, never conceiving how the motion of the earth below should not wave him from a knock perpendicularly directed from a body in the air above."—*Browne's Works*, vol. iii. p. 365.

of probable motives and ordinary conduct. He is convinced that the first surreptitious edition of the *Religio Medici* "was conveyed to the press by a distant hand," so that the circulation of a false copy might be an excuse for publishing the true; and then gently moralizes upon a fraud which he himself invents, as "inimical to the confidence which makes the happiness of society." Undoubtedly, the stratagem supposed by Johnson has been practised by some authors; but one more egregiously foreign to the majestic self-esteem of Browne, or more contradicted by all internal evidence, could not well have occurred to the ingenuity of conjecture. When, in the spirit of his gorgeous and Platonic mysticism, Browne asserts that "his life has been a miracle of thirty years, which to relate were not history, but a piece of poetry," Johnson can only observe, that "a man may visit France and Italy, reside at Montpellier and Padua, and at last take his degree at Leyden, without anything miraculous." He fairly confesses that he believes there is no hope of guessing rightly at the signification of this arrogant boast; and then proceeds himself to guess that it is but the conclusion at which every human being, if he had leisure and disposition to recollect his thoughts and actions, might arrive.

If Johnson, from want of sympathy with the Abstract and the Visionary, gives no satisfactory analysis of Browne as an author and a man, Coleridge and Hazlitt, unfitted for the task by a fault precisely the reverse, do not appear to us to supply the deficiency. Hazlitt himself has disposed of the remarks of his eloquent contemporary with concise and summary justice. But when he favours us with his own definitions, it is not Browne criticised, but Browne imitated. Deep calleth unto deep. The Obscure of the author is elucidated by the Unintelligible of the commentator. What can we possibly learn of Browne by being told that "the antipodes

are next-door neighbours to him, and doomsday is not far off;" "that nature is too little for the grasp of his style—that it is as if his books had dropped from the clouds, or Friar Bacon's head could speak."* If the "romantic prettinesses" of Coleridge had not thrown much light upon the subject, certainly no better success has attended the cloudy metaphors and colossal conceits of Hazlitt.

We had hoped that an edition professing to contain so complete a collection of the works of so singular an author—an edition which, as already mentioned, occupied the labours of the editor for nearly twelve years—would have supplied the want of which we complain;—filled up an important gap in historical criticism;—and presented the general reader with a clear and elaborate view of the merits and peculiarities of one, nor the least, of those gigantic writers, who conducted the progress of language and of mind through that memorable interval which, commencing with the imperial pomp of Bacon, closed with the stern simplicity of Locke. This task has not, however, been included in the designs of the editor. He has attached, indeed, to the biography by Johnson a supplementary memoir, which exhibits great research and care, and furnishes us with some novel information. But what we principally desired is still wanting. We confess we do not very greatly care whether the Christian name of Browne's father-in-law was Sir Ralph or Sir Thomas; nor are we highly interested in the information afforded to the worthy editor by "Augustus Brigstocke, Esq., of Blaenpant, county Cardigan,"—that "Anne, sixth daughter of Sir Edward Browne (eldest son of Sir Thomas) had no children." These, and other matters of genealogical knowledge, furnished to us by the industry of the editor, we think might have been advantageously exchanged for an enlightened criticism of the author's works, and a searching and

* Hazlitt's 'Lectures on Dramatic Literature,' p. 293.

candid appreciation of his intellectual character; assisted by such evidence as may be collected from his own correspondence, and the testimony of his contemporaries. But to this negative complaint, not of what he has done, but what he has omitted, we confine our animadversions on Mr. Wilkin's execution of his pleasing duty. He has enriched this edition not only with some of Browne's miscellaneous essays hitherto unpublished, but with a mass of interesting and valuable correspondence; and in this he has provided many materials for the task, which too modestly he has declined himself to accomplish.

Thomas Browne, descended from an ancient family in Cheshire, was born in 1605, educated at Winchester and Oxford, took his degree of master of arts, practised physic in Oxfordshire, travelled into Ireland, thence into France, Italy, and Holland, obtained his doctor's degree at Leyden, and settled as a physician at Shipden Hall, near Halifax. So far there is nothing peculiar in what we know of his history. His record is not in restless actions, but in adventurous and roving thoughts. He wrote a book, and his true history began. This work, entitled *Religio Medici* (the Religion of a Physician), lay for several years unknown to the public. The writer professed to consider it but an exercise to himself, "contrived in his private study," and not intended for publication. There is no reason to dispute the assertion. But it was shown to friends—it was transcribed by admirers—and in the seventh or eighth year after its composition, an anonymous and very incorrect edition of it found its way into the press. It attracted, at its first appearance, the attention of the subtlest minds. Sir Kenelm Digby reviewed it for the satisfaction of my Lord Dorset. The author acknowledged and revised it—edition followed edition—annotators enriched, scholars translated it. Some found the author an Atheist, others a Papist. Alexander Ross sought to crush it with a hostile reply; Levin Nicol von

Moltke, to bury it with notes; Guy Patin speaks of the impression it made in Paris—confesses the book has *des gentilles choses*, but doubts its orthodoxy, and half regrets the man is alive, "because he may grow worse, not better:" Buddeus reviled all physicians, in wrath at the impiety of the English doctor; while, with greater justice, Conringius fervently wished every theologian were as pious. Thomas Browne, the obscure practitioner, rose at once to a level with the most famous wits and the most erudite dreamers of the time. In the interval between the composition and the formal publication of this remarkable work, the young physician had married the daughter of a Norfolk gentleman, and settled at Norwich. Four years after its publication appeared the *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, or 'Inquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors,' a work of brilliant learning and consummate ingenuity. Browne's name was now established. Scholars pressed on him their correspondence upon subjects the most various; criticisms and encomiums were showered upon his head; and, at last, as a climax or a bathos to his career, he was knighted at Oxford by Charles the Second.

The most remarkable of Browne's subsequent works are—'The Garden of Cyrus, or the *Quincuncial Lozenge*, or Net-work Plantations of the Ancients, Artificially, Naturally, Mystically considered;' and '*Hydriotaphia;* Urn Burial, or a Discourse on the Sepulchral Urns found in Norfolk.' In his miscellaneous tracts, as throughout his whole correspondence, may be found proofs of his grasping and inquisitive mind, his multiform and copious knowledge; but on the four works enumerated, viz.—The *Religio Medici*, the 'Inquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors,' the 'Garden of Cyrus,' and the 'Urn Burial,'—rests his fame as a writer of extraordinary powers of thought and language. It is the general characteristics of these writings that we propose briefly to examine.

It seems to us that a principal error of those who have bewildered themselves and their readers in endeavouring to describe and dissect the genius of Browne—who have been so much at a loss to account for its singularities and contradictions, and who have only attempted to seize its subtle spirit in meshes of antithesis and hyperbole—arises from this cause: they have regarded the man apart from his age—they have set him up as a moral curiosity, who thought "that the proper object of speculation was by darkening knowledge to breed speculation," and who "loved to converse chiefly with the spectral apparitions of things;"—they have thought (and what is worse, written) of a man living in the seventeenth century as if he were living in our own day—as if he *voluntarily* adopted the strange errors, and, from constitutional temperament, combined the motley paradoxes they find in him—as if he insisted upon rounding every study with a dream, and losing every fancy in a labyrinth. The result of this view is, that they have represented a very enlightened and studious man as a rare and incomprehensible anomaly that never existed out of Laputa, and had no archetype except in that illustrious philosopher who passed his time extracting sunbeams from cucumbers.

But the moment we begin to look around us—to contemplate the literary character of the time—to compare the psychological nature of the man with that of his contemporaries, the mystery dies away; the marvellous fades into sober colours; and Sir Thomas Browne, like most other men of genius, is but an author of great imagination and original habits of thought and study, reflecting back upon us the fantastic light that he received from the influences that gathered and played around him. In the earlier stages of the literature of a nation, the demarcations between prose and poetry are comparatively faint and confused. The prodigal superstitions, the credulous errors, from which men emerge

into the dawn of truth, still linger around the footsteps of the hardiest adventurers. They enter the domains of reason guided by the imagination, and carry not only the language but the temperament of poetry into the severest provinces of prose. Whoever looks into our own early literature will find a strong illustration of this general truth. When, fresh from the giant impulse of the Reformation, the intellect of England broke forth under Elizabeth, a variety of causes combined to quicken and exalt the imagination. The defiance of Rome—the discovery of America—the effects of the press — the almost simultaneous burst of the Greek, the Roman, the Italian poetry upon the wonder and emulation of men, born precisely at an age when thought was most broadly and deeply agitated by political circumstances—were not events that tended to divide the poet from the philosopher. On the contrary, no channel of research, however guarded and fenced about, could resist the rush of the great deeps so universally broken up. Poetry flowed into every course, and sparkled upon every wave, in which men could launch what Bacon has so nobly called the "ships of time." The Greek and Italian authors exercised to the utmost the strength of the language to find adequate translation for their unfamiliar beauties—a profusion of new words and new combinations was the result of the new ideas—the nervous and concise Saxon style became gorgeous with foreign riches, while its periods grew long and stately to the swell of a borrowed music, and, oppressed with their own triumphs, marched, laden and encumbered, amidst the spoils of nations. Whoever turns from Chaucer and his earlier successors to the literature of Elizabeth and James, will see how completely the revolution, produced in great measure by translations, had changed the genius of the language from the simple to the splendid. The wonderful translation of the Bible familiarized the ear to, and coloured

the language with, the expressions of the East. The Reformation was our Pisistratus—the translation of the Bible was our Homer. A new inspiration and a new audience were produced; for the most popular book in England was the most glorious poetry in the world.

To the sacred volume, which, in a form at once popular yet sublime, was brought home to every man's breast, succeeded the marvels of classical invention. The gigantic images of Homer—the royal majesty of Virgil—were contrasted, or wildly amalgamated, with the chivalrous grotesque of Ariosto, the adventures of Tancred, the enchanted gardens of Armida. Even in history—the boasted province of fact, the fictitious embellishment was the first imparted to the popular mind of England; and the romances of Plutarch were cherished and admired long before our ancestors appreciated the grave profundity of Thucydides—the tragic epigram of Tacitus.

These importations were hailed with the delight of novel impressions. Of acquisitions so important a scholar could not but parade his knowledge; quotations, and allusions, and authorities crowded his pages and guided his conclusions. He did not only quote the authors, he believed in them. He supported an axiom out of Plutarch or Ælian. If he could have written a treatise upon the doctrine that two and two make four, he would have been enchanted to find a passage in Ovid's Metamorphoses to authorize the proposition. What coloured his thoughts animated his style. Living amidst poetry, its soil clung to his steps whenever he walked abroad. His disquisitions required little more than the mere form of verse in order to become poems. To say nothing of the 'Arcadia' of Sir Philip Sidney, the exceeding popularity of which attests the taste of those scholastic coteries that then constituted "The Public," we have only to open the 'Advancement of

Learning,' to see how the Attic bees clustered above the cradle of the new philosophy. Poetry pervaded the thoughts, it inspired the similes, it hymned in the majestic sentences of "the wisest of mankind." A very masculine sense—a very observant and inductive mind, in Bacon, prevented the imagination getting the better of the reason; and to those natural gifts must be added the soberizing effect of an early entrance into life—the dry pursuits of law and politics—and a vast practical knowledge of mankind. But the sense of Bacon was not exempt from the prejudices, any more than his style was devoid of the poetry, of the time. He who wrote the *Novum Organum* did not disbelieve in witchcraft. In fact, as some kings have transmitted to posterity, in their single person, the image and representative of all that is glorious in an age, so James I., not as a monarch but a student, embodied all of his own time—except the glory; he had the learning and the pedantry, though not the genius, of the age; he had an unlimited credulity, and an insatiable appetite for the marvellous; he had the notion that in apophthegms, and aphorisms, and historical fables, and poetical maxims lay the craft of government and the philosophy of experience; he quoted all the Latin he could remember; and he believed unhesitatingly in ghosts and witches. All these were not the exclusive peculiarities of James I.; they were the characteristics of the great bulk of English scholars in his time. It was reserved for a vicious and degenerate period to correct the literary faults of a virtuous and a great one. There are two cures to the errors that belong to superstition; one is the influence of an experimental philosophy, the other is that of a gay and polite scepticism. Perhaps the wit and ease, the profligacy and *insouciance* of the court of Charles II. did as much as causes more solemn and acknowledged, to counteract the old Gothic superstition; and the light hand of court poets and court freethinkers brushed

away from the page of philosopher and poet the clinging devotion of the old beliefs, and the gorgeous pedantry of the old expressions. The short and clear succinctness of the French diction began to break up the colossal sentences of the earlier English. The petulant and lively spirit of French disquisition began to undermine the bastions and outworks with which men had fenced round the citadels of their faith. Time, in its usual progress, and the mighty events of the Civil War, had raised up new generations of thoughtful and anxious men; who, by combining research with practical ends, took philosophy out of the fairy meads in which, with dreams peopling every tree, she had so long wandered. To a small and scholastic, well-born and accomplished tribunal of readers, succeeded a large, and miscellaneous, and sturdy public. A popular style, and popular subjects, were necessary to ensure popular favour; gradually our literature lost its euphuism, and went back to something of its Saxon origin. It was not for gallant and graceful nobles, intoxicated with the Italian Helicon, and "enamelling with pied flowers their thoughts of gold," * neither was it for clerkly and enthusiastic students, making their memory the museum for all antiquities, that Locke wove his plain and unembellished periods. It was in the wide circle of a stern and a practical public that he found space to wield the iron flail that demolished those stately and glittering errors, which, in a preceding generation, were the idols of the wise. But, while a growing people became the audience of the philosopher, who shall say how far a licentious court, with which nothing was too sacred for a jest, prepared the way for his opinions? The Rochesters were the pioneers of the Lockes.

But it was before this second revolution began—it was while, indeed, the fashion of composition, at once pedantic and poetical, which characterised the

* Sir Philip Sidney's 'Arcadia.'

reign of James, was daily growing more pedantic and more poetical under that of his unfortunate son, till it found its euthanasia amidst the Latin flowers with which Milton crowned and buried it, that Sir Thomas Browne received his intellectual education and lavished its fruits. Though he lived on amidst the wits and freethinkers of the time of Charles II., "he wore the cloke and bootes" of the old style. He probably read little of the works of his younger contemporaries; for in his correspondence he scarcely notices the current literature of his day. Even Hudibras —the opinions, the learning, the humour of which must have been delightful to his taste—appears only to draw from him an erudite comment upon the antiquity of burlesque poems.* He seems more at home with Hipponactes than with Samuel Butler. He continued to the last to live apart and aloof, among his ancient authors, and his quaint but sublime thoughts; a scholar by habit, a philosopher by boast, and a poet by nature.

Viewing Browne, then, in this light, associated with such of his contemporaries as were similarly educated, placed, and influenced, the more startling contradictions in his intellectual character are easily solved. It is true that, with a luminous understanding and a cautious and, in some respects, sceptical mind, he believed in witchcraft. But so did others, with even broader views and acuter comprehension. Bacon, but little his senior in time, and far less inclined by temper to revere ancient belief erroneously propped on scriptual authorities, was no wiser upon this point. The marvellous so largely entered into the temperament of every scholar, that, if checked in one channel, it was sure to cast its humours through another. Sir Kenelm Digby, who gravely argues against astrology, believed in the wonderful effects of sympathetic powders—is respectfully doubtful of chiromancy—but persuaded that "at the approach

* See 'Works,' vol. iv. p. 253.

of the murderer, the slain body suddenly bleeds again." If, when asked by "My Lord Chief Baron" whether the fits of an old woman were from disease or the Devil, Sir Thomas Browne answered, that "they were heightened by the Devil co-operating with the malice of the witches," we are not to find his excuse in Dr. Aiken's slovenly dogma, that in his mind "fancy and feeling were predominant over judgment," nor to adopt all the fantastic apologies of pseudo-metaphysical admirers. His excuse was in the trial itself—in a Lord Chief Baron (who, much more a man of the world than the studious physician, should have been a much deeper philosopher in such a case) putting the question, and summing the evidence—in a jury of twelve men finding a verdict of guilty. There was nothing in Browne's genius nor in his studies—we do not say that should have rendered him wiser than Bacon—but wiser than twelve Englishmen, with a Lord Chief Baron to boot, upon a matter of witchcraft, then almost a matter of religion. Nay, his very learning only plunged him deeper into error; since it supplied his memory with all past instances of witchcraft, sacred and profane, and even assured him "there had been a great discovery of witches lately in Denmark!" Still less can we wonder at the Knight's leaning towards astrology; or (with Newton, equally cautious as bold, in our recollection) at an amusing curiosity about the philosopher's stone. The truth of the saying of Luther, that "the human mind is like a drunken peasant on horseback — set it up one side and it falls on the other,"—is startlingly visible, if applied to the giants of the past when examined by the merest pigmies of the present. The great men who have lived before us have lighted us from their knowledge to a survey of their follies. While we breathe and move, while we imagine and invent, we ourselves are laying up new stores for the ridicule of posterity.

Like his contemporaries, Browne's thoughts were

strongly steeped in a passion for the marvellous and recondite; like his contemporaries, he was a reverent and enthusiastic scholar; and with his contemporaries he shared also the redundant periods—the florid diction—the exuberant poetry, which were thought to give classic beauty and importance to prose. How much in these latter attributes he resembles the greatest of his coævals may be seen on comparison with Jeremy Taylor and Milton.

When all that belongs to poetry, except the rhythm, glowed from the sober pulpit, or found its melodious way into the ungenial and angry elements of political dispute, or theological dissertation, there is no reason why critics should be so amazed to behold it bright and living in the pages of enthusiastic reverie or ideal contemplation. This poetical spirit pervaded the reasoning, as well as the expressions, of the writers of that time. When Jeremy Taylor wishes to prove the insensible progress of "a man's life and reason," he does not set about it by a syllogism, but a picture. He is not contented with a simple illustration—he raises up an elaborate landscape. "As when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and, by and by, gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns like those which decked the brow of Moses, when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God, and still, while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher, till he shows a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers; even so is a man's reason and his life!"

It is in the same poetical spirit of *painting* thoughts, that Browne often conveys to us his meaning. Thus, at the close of his 'Garden of Cyrus,'

wishing to denote that it is late, he tells us "that the Hyades (the Quincunx of Heaven) run low—that we are unwilling to spin out our awaking thoughts into the phantasms of sleep—that to keep our eyes open longer were but to act our antipodes—that the huntsmen are up in America, and they are already past their first sleep in Persia." On this Coleridge exclaims, "Was there ever such a reason given before for going to bed at midnight? to wit, that if we did not, we should be acting the part of our antipodes!" Begging pardon of "the old man eloquent," we should say that Browne did not conjure up these images for the cold purpose of "giving a reason." He was not arguing upon the matter—he was delighting himself, as he sought to delight the reader, by such vivid and rich associations and shapes as the idea of sleep and midnight could evoke. He was not writing as a logician—but a poet; and, so far from being alone and peculiar in this mode of expression, reasons (if so they are to be called) equally far-fetched and exuberant, as applied to some simple proposition, may be found in abundance, not only in the purple eloquence of Jeremy Taylor, but the complacent dissertations of Sir Kenelm Digby, and even in the interminable prosings of Alexander Ross. Literature was still in that stage when things were presented to the eye, not in the brevity of words, but in the life of pictures. The arts of composition resembled even less the Egyptian hyeroglyph than the Mexican painting.

In Browne, the scholar and the sage could never subdue the poet. He felt this himself. He was often conscious that, as the poet, he said many things which he could not gravely defend as a philosopher. Thus, in the advertisement prefixed to the '*Religio Medici*,' he warns the reader, that "there are many things delivered rhetorically — many expressions therein merely tropical; and therefore, also, there are many things to be taken in a soft and flexible sense, and not to be called unto the rigid test of

reason." We believe that this warning, prefixed to the *Religio Medici*, is applicable, though in a less degree, to all the works of the author; and that hence many of his critics have confounded the fantastic embellishment, the wild conjecture, or the quaint and sweet perversity of a sportive genius, with the assertions of grave and positive belief. Thus, our author did not conceive that he was advancing the most sensible and practical, but the most pleasing and solemn argument in favour of gardens, when he observes, "that Paradise succeeds the grave—that the verdant state of things is the symbol of the resurrection—and that to flourish in the state of glory we must first be sown in corruption." Neither, probably, when commenting on marriage and the sexual ties, did he mean us to conceive it to be his deliberate wish that "men might procreate like trees:" he merely, in a quaint extravagance, expressed the usual desire of philosophy to escape the tumults of the passions; or conveyed the trite and ancient morality, that possession sates, and that the coarser gratifications are unworthy follies.

Perhaps this twofold way of examining things is more common amongst writers than we are aware; especially with men like Browne, who rather write to throw off an exuberance of sentiment and thought, than for the stern design of effecting some particular and defined object. Of a mild and kindly temperament, fond of his books and his curiosities, and spinning his subtle and aërial thoughts from materials which the crowded world casts out of its bustling way into nooks and corners—moderate as a politician, averse to all disputes in theology, inclined in both to leave things in their beaten course, beneath the shelter of unexamining veneration—there did not exist for Sir Thomas Browne those great and exciting interests which gird up the loins of a man's mind, and make him in earnest in all that he undertakes. Even in philosophy, he rather philosophized, than can

be called a philosopher. If he was curious, observant, and laborious, it was in those solemn trifles and minute prodigies which amuse the leisure and enrich the memory, but do not educate the mind to great practical results. He did not keenly exert his reason, unless he was seduced to it by one of the brilliant visions which delighted his fancy. Thus, perhaps, his most argumentative work, the one in which he most deliberately proceeds through the links of effect and cause, is that in which he attempts to prove the universal operation of *quincuncial* forms and combinations throughout the works of nature, and the mystical application and importance of the number FIVE! —"Quincunxes," as Coleridge pithily says, "in heaven above, quincunxes in earth below, quincunxes in the mind of men, quincunxes in tones, in optic nerves, in roots of trees, in leaves, in everything."

We cannot subscribe to the grave opinion of the editor, as to the importance of this theory, nor attach any very reverential faith to "Mr. Macleay's persevering and successful advocacy of a quinary arrangement." But if Sir Thomas Browne required an apology for devoting his learning and his genius to such a subject, the apology is before us when we see that, in the nineteenth century, his wildest conceits have their admirers and followers: as Browne himself well and gracefully expresses it—"as though there were a metempsychosis, and the soul of one man passed into another, opinions do find, after certain revolutions, men and minds like those that first begat them." In fact, Browne neither adopted this subject of the quincunx purely as a brilliant whim, nor yet as a wholly serious and important discovery in philosophy. The thought charmed his imagination—it afforded scope for his curious and scattered learning—for his golden and fantastic thoughts. It was of a nature that united both his leading attributes, a taste for the learned and a passion for the marvellous. He saw that he could please himself by a work congenial

to his thoughts and studies; and, not less, that he could please the public by a very remarkable composition. And how much he considered all the far-fetched illustrations and anecdotical learning in which he indulged, in the light of episodical ornament, rather than of sober argument; digressions intended to keep alive the reader's interest, and beautify his work; in short, how much he regarded such extraneous matter as *an art of composition*, may be seen in his correspondence. Thus, for instance, in giving his son some hints in the meditated publication of a 'Journey into Upper Hungary to the Mines,' he specially reminds him to add the story of the man that put a snake's head into his mouth in the bath, and of the hussar who bathed in a frost at midnight. He tells him "that he need not be so particular as to give the full account of separating the metals in this narration, but bids him *remember to put in the green jaspar-coloured tomb at Larissa, in the barber's shop*." In short, the advice of the great master is that of a man accustomed to think less of the plain practical nature of any selected theme, than of all the embellishments of anecdote and allusion which may be wrought in "purple patches" upon the stuff. That Browne himself believed in the operation of his darling quincunx, may perhaps be possible; just as he believed in apparitions and sorcerers, but perhaps with the same unexamining and poetical faith; for it is difficult to know when that writer is gravely and honestly in earnest, who tells us that "he has one common and authentic philosophy he learned in the schools, whereby he discourses and satisfies the reason of other men; another, more reserved and drawn from experience, whereby he contents his own."* Whether, in the discourse on the quincunx, the disciple of Pythagoras meant to satisfy the reason of other men, or by experience to content his own, it is difficult to determine. Perhaps he thought little

* 'Religio Medici,' vol. ii. p. 105.

about it; and did not mean to found a philosophy, but to write a book.*

But if it be disputable whether, in the higher or stricter sense of the word, Browne was a philosopher, no one has ever written sentences more beautifully philosophical. He was worthy to be a disciple of the sage who said, "man was born to contemplate." His pages are filled with a lofty and ideal morality, and his maxims are bright with luminous, if unconnected truths. In some respects he was, among the prose-writers of that day, what Wordsworth is among the poets of this—dedicating even the familiar to the beautiful, and not disdaining "to suck divinity from the flowers of nature." He cannot allow ugliness in a toad or bear—and "even that vulgar and tavern music, which makes one man merry, another mad, strikes in him a deep fit of devotion, and a profound contemplation of the FIRST COMPOSER. There is in it a hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the whole world and creatures of God—such a melody to the ear as the whole world, well understood, would afford the understanding." It is from such hints and suggestions of thought that Browne, like Wordsworth, plumes his wings and raises himself beyond 'the visible diurnal sphere.' A temperament somewhat common to both was in both fed by similar political tenets, and theological veneration; apart from the anxious and exciting cares of men who struggle actively with or against the multitude. The *Religio Medici* is one of the most beautiful prose poems in the language; its power of diction, its

* A chapter in the more serious work of the 'Pseudodoxia Epidemica,' makes it, however, highly probable that Browne put little faith in his own ingenious deductions in the Garden of Cyrus, namely, chapter xii., book iv., "of the great climacteric year, that is, sixty-three." In this chapter he contends with great vigour against the very doctrine of the efficacy of numbers that he advocated in defence of the quincunx: and observes that "not only one set of numbers, but all or most of the digits, have been mystically applauded," and says, that, though "God made all things in number, weight, and measure, yet nothing *by* them, or *through* the efficacy of either," &c.

subtlety and largeness of thought, its exquisite conceits and images, have no parallel out of the writers of that brilliant age, when Poetry and Prose had not yet divided their domain, and the Lyceum of Philosophy was watered by the Ilissus of the Nine.

It is difficult to conceive a deep and a just thought more eloquently expressed than in the following words: "Nature is not at variance with art nor art with nature—they being both the servants of His providence. Art is the perfection of nature. Were the world now as it was the sixth day, there were yet a chaos. Nature hath made one world and art another. In belief all things are artificial, *for nature is the art of God.*"

We cannot refuse to our readers, well known as it is to many, that noble piece of egotism, in which all believers in our spiritual immortality may share :—

"For my life it is a miracle of thirty years, which to relate were not a history, but a piece of poetry, and would sound to common ears like a fable.* For the world I count it not an inn but a hospital, and a place not to live but to die in. The world that I regard is myself, it is the microcosm of my own frame, that I can cast my eye on—for the other I use it but like my globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. . . . The earth is a point not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us. That mass of flesh that circumscribes me, limits not my mind. That surface that tells the heavens it hath an end, cannot persuade me I have any. . . . Whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm or little world, I find myself something more than the great.

* This boast, which Dr. Johnson could not explain, and even the superrefining Sir Kenelm Digby took literally, evidently refers not to external and bodily adventures, but to the progress and operations of the soul. Nor, while in this passage the author alludes to such moral and spiritual mysteries as have been wrought within himself, does he mean to imply that his life has been more miraculous than that of another; since in a former passage ('Rel. Med.,' vol. ii. p. 21) he utters the same sentiment, but applies it generally. "*We* carry," he says, "with *us* the wonders we seek without *us*; there is all Africa 'and her prodigies in *us*, &c.'" It is not because, as Dr. Johnson imagines, Browne thought himself distinguished from all the rest of his species, but because he thought himself *like* them, that he calls his life a miracle. Thus, in the very passage built upon the assertion that his life is a miracle, he says that "*he who understands not thus much has yet to begin the alphabet of man.*"

There is surely a piece of divinity in us—something that was before the heavens, and owes no homage unto the sun. Nature tells me I am the image of God as well as scripture. He that understands not thus much, hath not his introduction or first lesson, and hath yet to begin the alphabet of man."

Coleridge and others have spoken of the egotism of Browne; but Browne was not an egotist, though he wrote one work which, not composed for publication, but as a closet confession of his own opinions, was necessarily egotistical. It is rather remarkable, on the contrary, that, despite the great success of the *Religio Medici*, and the delicious temptation to go on in the same strain which a man incurs when he has once made the world a confidant, and finds it listen to all he says of himself, it concluded, as it began, his self-dissections. His tale once told, Browne seems to have felt, like Goethe, after the composition of his Werther—as if he had unburdened his mind of anxious secrets; the confession was made and the absolution given. He wrote the book while young, unsettled, and unmarried. Youth is generally an egotist. Most young gentlemen and young ladies, if they write at all, write greatly about themselves. A settled life, household cares and affections, scatter their thoughts insensibly over a wider surface; and sentiment becomes less intense and more diffused.

The *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, or 'Inquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors,' was Browne's second, and, from its extent and elaborate learning, perhaps his most important work. It is, indeed, in this performance, that we lose sight, in great measure, of the ideal and extravagant poet, and find ourselves with the sober and laborious scholar. The style has little, if any, of the eccentric flights, or stately music, of the knight's other works. It is, indeed, dry, quaint, and pedantic, as was the peculiarity of the day; but has not the ornament and digression which form, elsewhere, the peculiarities of the writer. It is evident that, as he himself says in his preface, he addresses

his pen unto the "knowing and leading part of learning." The work properly consists of two main divisions; the one devoted to the correction of such errors (mostly in chemistry or natural history) as he encountered in his professional pursuits; the other to the examination of miscellaneous matters which came before him in his capacity of a curious and indefatigable student. In the first, it is noticeable how much his profession served to sober and restrain the wild and speculative temper he displays in all else. That profession made, indeed, the great link between himself and the common world—it tied him down to the practical: the moment he gets rid of it he is in the seventh heaven. In his remarks as a chemist and naturalist we cannot but observe a habit of cautious and zealous experiment. Many of the then popular fallacies he refutes with plain common sense, or by the testimony of actual experience; and his observations and inductions contain the outline and suggestion of some of the important discoveries of modern science. The fatal and unexploded errors of the alchymists, indeed, occasionally vitiate his most ingenious arguments; and these he sufficiently venerated, not, in some instances, to submit their dogmas to that test of experiment, which he enforced towards authorities not a whit less equivocal. In natural history, also, his passion for the marvellous breaks out at times. He stoutly rejects the basilisk and the griffin; but he believes it not impossible that elephants may have spoken rationally; and says, with earnest pleasantry, "that to those who would attempt to teach animals the art of speech, the dogs and cats that usually speak unto witches may afford some encouragement." *

* We ourselves have witnessed an example of the curious and credulous exaggeration which has construed certain articulations in animals into rational speech. Some time since, in travelling through Italy, we heard, in grave earnest, from several Italians, of the prodigy of a Pomeranian dog that had been taught to speak most intelligibly by Sir William Gell. Afterwards, in visiting that accomplished and lamented gentleman at

The nature of the more miscellaneous essays may be conjectured from the following titles :—

In Book IV. (on many popular and received tenets concerning man), 'That Jews stink,'—'On Pigmies.'

In Book V. (of many things questionable as they are commonly described in pictures), 'Of the Picture of Dolphins,'—'Of the Picture of Haman Hanged,' &c.

In the Seventh Book (of popular and received tenets, chiefly historical, and some deduced from the Holy Scriptures)—'Of Methuselah,'—'That a Man hath one Rib less than a Woman,'—'Of the Wish of Philoxenus to have the Neck of a Crane', &c. With these, however, are interspersed many of more gravely philosophical and antiquarian importance; such as 'The River Nilus;' the 'Origin of Gypsies;' 'Of the Blackness of Negroes,' &c.

Nor are we to suppose that, in many of those subjects which now seem to us so obsolete and frivolous, Sir Thomas Browne was engaged in attacking errors without life and defence. Scarce the absurdest delusion he demolished but had its stubborn champion; and every inch of the bridge, from Fable to Truth, was fought with all the knight-errantry of men who see in Ignorance the beloved country in which they were born, and for which they are contented to die. No invaders ever found patriots so desperate, as a man who attacks a prejudice finds the peaceful possessors of its realm. Error lives in the hearts of its subjects; it is the most venerated and beloved of monarchs. Thus Sir Thomas Browne could not even assert, in opposition to the ancients, that garlic did not hinder the attraction of the load-

Naples, we requested to hear an animal possessed of so unusual a gift. And, as the friends of the urbane scholar can bear witness, the dog undoubtedly could utter a howl, which, assisted by the hand of the master in closing the jaw at certain inflections, might be intelligibly construed into the words, "Damn grandmamma!" Such a dog with such an anathema in his vocabulary, would have hanged any witch in England three centuries ago.

stone, but what an antagonist started up to declare that the ancients could not be mistaken; and, therefore, they must have had "a *stronger kind* of garlic than is with us!" Another critic (whose lucubrations are, however, confined to manuscript*), in opposition to Browne's scepticism as to the existence of griffins, clenches the question by asserting that he has himself seen a griffin's—*claw*. Yet both these commentators were men, not of the ignorant multitude, but of the learned few. Alexander Ross (the first referred to) is in many of his notions even more enlightened than Browne. The *Pseudodoxia* is the book of 'Popular Fallacies' of the sixteenth century; not so valuable, perhaps, from the subjects it embraces, as the spirit in which it is conceived—a spirit of bold, but not irreverent scepticism, built upon experimental induction.

In the 'Garden of Cyrus' and the treatise on 'Urn Burial' we again see the dreaming and poetical mind that breathes its beauty through the *Religio Medici*. Of the main object of the 'Garden of Cyrus' we have already spoken. Of the ingenuity and learning with which the idea is followed out through innumerable forms, it is impossible to convey an adequate conception. The genius of the author never proceeds to conclusions in a straight line of argument; it undulates and serpentines through a landscape of fertile images, wherever it can find a sunbeam, or repose upon flowers. With what grace and eloquence this remarkable writer has in the following passage† availed himself of an old Aristotelian sentence the reader will judge:—

"Light that makes things seen makes some things invisible. Were it not for darkness, and the shadow of the earth, the noblest part of creation had remained unseen, and the stars in heaven as invisible as on the fourth day, when they were created above the horizon with the sun, or there was not an eye to

* Sir Hamon L'Estrange, quoted vol. ii. p. 173.
† 'Garden of Cyrus,' vol. iii. p. 436.

behold them. The greatest mystery of religion is expressed by adumbration, and in the noblest part of Jewish types we find the cherubim shadowing the mercy-seat. Life itself is but the shadow of death, and souls departed but the shadows of the living. All things fall under this name. The sun itself is but the dark Simulachrum, and light but the shadow of God." *

Both in the 'Garden of Cyrus' and the 'Urn Burial' the author has resort to the ancient scholastic art of exalting as much as possible the nature of his theme by the grandeur of the exordium. In the first, mindful of his own profession, he observes upon its antiquity and sacred origin, "that physic may plead high from that medical act of God in casting so deep a sleep upon our first parent; and chirurgery find its whole art in that one passage concerning the rib of Adam." Yet, preferring, as in duty bound, the dignity of the theme to that of the author, he proceeds to remark that even medicine can have "no rivalry with garden contrivance and herbary; for if Paradise were planted the third day of the creation, as wiser divinity concludeth, the nativity thereof was too early for horoscopy. Gardens were before gardeners, and but some hours before the earth." In like manner our author commences the 'Urn Burial' by making the world itself a grave. "That great antiquity, America, lay buried for thousands of years, and a large part of the earth is still in the urn unto us." It is injustice to the spirit of such passages to consider them merely as pieces of far-fetched and humorous quaintness — their extravagance is that of a wild but noble poetry. They are absurdities only to those who consider the author as the logician —they are fanciful, yet appropriate flights, if we regard him as the poet.

Like the 'Garden of Cyrus,' the subject of the 'Urn Burial' afforded to Browne a theme especially

* It was said by Aristotle that "light is the shadow of God." And the passage in the text is but a series of the most poetical illustrations of that sublime aphorism.

congenial to his motley erudition and creative imagination. But as in the latter he had no whim to enforce, no system to pursue, so his genius is far less restrained and perverted; and for noble thoughts, and in lofty diction, the 'Hydriotaphia' greatly excels the 'Garden of Cyrus.' The author reviews the customs of burial from all time and in all nations. He brings before us a panorama of graves. But this is done in the spirit of a poet conversing with antiquity. He is happy to take an illustration from the shades of Homer. The beryl ring on the finger of the mistress of Propertius, when she appeared to him as a ghost, assures us that "the dead buried with them the things wherein they delighted." No touching sentiment that can be extracted from the dry pedantries of learning escapes him. The sole point in the biography of Domitian that can please us is introduced with the careless delicacy that belongs to a master hand. "The ashes of Domitian were mingled with those of Julia."—"Unsatisfied affections conceived some satisfaction to be neighbours in the grave, to lie urn by urn, and touch but in their manes." No criticism ever so wholly misrepresented a work as that of Coleridge upon this beautiful treatise. He tells us that it is "earthy;" "that graves and sepulchres are redolent in every line." "You have now," he says, "dark mould, now a thigh-bone, now a skull, then a bit of mouldered coffin, &c., or the echo of a November psalm wafted on a November wind, and the gayest thing you shall meet with shall be a silver nail or gilt Anno Domini from a perished coffin-top." In the first place, as Mr. Hazlitt justly observes, "with such things you do not meet at all in the text;" and, secondly, which Mr. Hazlitt omits to observe, so far from the subject being treated in a gloomy spirit, its darker parts are relieved by a prodigal fancy, and exalted by all that belongs to a Christian's imperishable hopes. He who recalls the light and cheerful customs of classic

sepulture—the perfumed ashes, the urn "laden with flowers and ribbons"—will scarcely conceive that a less gloomy character belongs to the Gothic terrors and dreary aspect of a modern charnel. But Browne views not the contrast in this light—he sees the Christian burial through the rites that typify resurrection—he thinks that "Christians have handsomely glossed the deformity of death by civil rites which take off brutal terminations." Nor, if his subject necessarily lead him to dwell upon the vanities of human life, does he ever fail to soften that bitter truth by some sweet or elevated recurrence to the life beyond. It is in this sense that he thus concludes his remarks upon "pyramids, arches, obelisks, those irregularities of vainglory and wild enormities of ancient magnanimity."

"To subsist in lasting monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names and predicament of chimæras, were large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their Elysiums. But all this is nothing in the metaphysics of true belief. To live indeed is to be again ourselves, which being not only a hope, but an evidence in noble believers, 'tis all one to lie in St. Innocent's churchyard as in the sands of Egypt. Ready to be anything in the ecstacy of being ever, and as content with six feet as the moles of Adrianus."

Of his tolerant and thoughtful spirit, whether as applied to the physical infirmities of some trembling martyr, or to the fame of a long-calumniated, because long-uncomprehended heathen, we select the two following examples :—

"The contempt of death from corporal animosity promoteth not our felicity. They may sit in the orchestra and noblest seats of heaven who have held up *shaking hands in* the fire, and *humanly* contended for glory."

"Epicurus lies deep in Dante's hell, wherein we meet with tombs enclosing souls which denied their immortalities. But whether the virtuous heathen who lived better than he spake, or, erring in the principles of himself, yet lived above philosophers of more specious maxims, lie so deep as he is placed, at least so low as not to rise against Christians, who, believing or knowing that truth, have lastingly denied it in their practice and conversation, were a query too sad to insist on."

Of the more weighty and solemn peculiarities of his style the following passage will furnish an adequate and sufficient specimen :—

"Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot than any that stand remembered in the known account of time? Without the favour of the everlasting register the first man had been as unknown as the last, and Methuselah's long life had been his only chronicle. Oblivion is not to be hired. The greatest part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story before the flood; and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the equinox? Every hour adds unto that current arithmetic which scarce stands one moment. And since death must be the Lucina of life, and even Pagans could doubt whether thus to live were to die—since our longest sun sets at right descensions, and makes but winter arches, and therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darkness and have our light in ashes—since the brother of death daily haunts us with dying mementoes, and time, that grows old in itself, bids us hope no long duration—diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation. Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings—we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities—miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which notwithstanding is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. A great part of antiquity contented their hopes of subsistency with a transmigration of their souls—a good way to continue their memories, while, having the advantage of plural successions, they could not but act something remarkable in such variety of beings, and, enjoying the fame of their passed selves, make accumulation of glory unto their last durations. Others, rather than be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being, and make one particle of the public soul of all things, which was no more than to return into their unknown and divine original again. Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses

or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise. Mizriam cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams."* . . . . "There is nothing strictly immortal but immortality. Whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end, which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy itself, and the highest strain of omnipotency to be so powerfully constituted as not to suffer even from the power of itself—all others have a dependent being, and within the reach of destruction. But the sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death makes a folly of posthumous memory. God, who can only destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names hath directly promised no duration. Wherein there is so much of chance that the boldest expectants have found unhappy frustration, and to hold long subsistence seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy† of his nature."

No one can read this beautiful passage without being deeply impressed with the wrong done to the author by those who consider him only valuable for his learning or amusing from his quaintness.

The above works are, as we have said, the best of Sir Thomas Browne's productions. To these, however, are added in the present collection 'The Christian Morals,' to an edition of which Dr. Johnson prefixed his biography of Browne—a work containing most of the worst faults of the author's style, with far less frequent and elevated evidence of its beauties, but still pregnant with occasional sentences of noble morality, expressed with exquisite felicity of diction. Perhaps, too, in proportion as we miss the sublime flights and vein of charmed and unearthly contemplation of the *Religio Medici*, we gain in homely sagacity

* Upon this profanation of applying mummies "to base medical uses," the author has a similar idea, less solemnly expressed, in his treatise on mummies, first published in the present edition. "Shall Egypt," he says, "lend out her antients unto chirurgeons and apothecaries, and Cheops and Psammetichus be weighed unto us for drugs—shall we eat of Chamnes and Amasis in electuaries and pills?" &c.

† Dr. Southey in his 'Colloquies' proposes to read "inf*i*my" for inf*a*my. The emendation is ingenious but wrong; infamy is the proper antithesis to "bravery" in the old signification of the latter word.

and practical sense. The nature of the subject—the office of a moral teacher to others—necessarily imposed much restraint upon the fancies the writer might indulge, when, as in the *Religio Medici*, conversing as it were with himself. We pass over the more trifling of the miscellaneous works hitherto published, which contain little very valuable, except as evidence of the lively and indefatigable scholarship of the man, and the singular questions to which he delighted to apply it;—fishes, birds, and insects, cymbals and *Eopalic* verses, languages and garlands, artificial hills and burrows, the situations of Sodom, Admah, and Zeboim—such are among the subjects which form the pastime of his leisure. Nor should we wholly omit mention of a very curious catalogue, in which he has drawn up, for the despair of biblomaniacs unborn, a series of what, alas! he too justly calls "rare and *generally* unknown books"—such as 'A Poem of Ovid writ in the Getic Language,' 'A Submarine Herbal, describing the several vegetables at the bottom of the sea,' and 'The Oneirocritica of King Mithridates!'

Of these and other miscellanies contained in the valuable edition of Mr. Wilkin, we content ourselves with saying that they tend to increase our admiration of the piety or research, the perseverance or ingenuity of a man, whose very eccentricities sharpen our interest in his character and pursuits. And this interest is yet more excited by the very curious family correspondence which Mr. Wilkin has judiciously introduced into the present edition. It is delightful to see this recondite scholar—this contemplative and refining dreamer—in the centre of his happy nor unworthy household. The correspondence of his elder son Edward (himself afterwards a distinguished physician) is singularly amusing. Edward appears to have inherited much of his father's passion for his profession. He had also, unconsciously perhaps to himself, much of the paternal eccentricity in pursuits

and studies. But though possessed of fair abilities, with untiring perseverance and zeal, he had nothing of the knight's brilliant fancy and subtle intellect. In his whole journal (inserted in the correspondence) not a spark of poetry is to be found. He travelled much, and through lands then little visited by our countrymen, but even adventure cannot extract much more from Mr. Edward Browne than the names of places and persons. He never stumbles on a vivid image or an original remark. He is quaint and solemn, but lifeless; like the ghost of one of his father's most pedantic periods. In fact he strongly reminds us of Moses in Goldsmith's charming tale; and indeed the worthy knight has, through the correspondence, a little resemblance to the Vicar, while Dame Dorothy, his lady, has all the generic features of the notable Mrs. Primrose. But we must allow the embryo doctor to speak to his own occupations through the medium of his own journal kept in his youth.

"January 1663–4.—On the 2nd he cut up a bull's heart and took out the bone, &c.

"On the 3rd he heard Mr. Johnson preach at Christ Church, and Mr. Tenison at St. Luke's Chappell, and took notice that the sun rose in an eliptical or oval figure."

On the 5th he dined with Mr. Howard, "where wee dranke out of pure golde, and had the music all the while," and on the 7th he opened a dog. He spent the 9th chiefly in observing the knee-joint of a calf, and receiving a visit from Monsieur Buttet, "which plays most admirably on the flagelet, bagpipe, and sea-trumpet." January the 14th was signalized by the discovery "that a monkey hath fourteen ribs on each side." The said monkey did not escape so easily, if indeed it be identical with the animal of which, on the 23rd, we find a noticeable entry. "Boyled the right forefoot of a monkey!"

The student was not, however, so devoted to his more scientific amusements as to forget recreations less sublime. "On January 28th, after spending the

morning in seeing oxen killed, he partook of a dancing at Mr. Houghton's till almost four o'clock in the following morning,"—a proof that our sober ancestors were not on all occasions exempt from our own vice of unseasonable hours. So again, if on February 10th Mr. Edward dissected a badger, he relaxed his mind on the 13th by drawing valentines at Mr. Howard's. Independent of the grave oddity of this journal, it is interesting from its description of the hospitable gaieties at the house of a country gentleman of the first rank—Mr. Howard, afterwards, by creation, Lord Howard of Castle Rising, and Earl of Norwich, and, by the death of his brother, sixth Duke of Norfolk. It is pleasant, as the editor remarks, to perceive the friendly and equal terms on which this munificent and accomplished gentleman mingled with the inhabitants of the town.

"He kept his Xmas this year (1663-4) at Norwich so magnificently as the like hath scarce been seen. They had dancing every night, and gave entertainment to all that would come. He built up a room on purpose to dance in, very large, and hung with the bravest hangings I ever saw. His candlesticks, snuffers, tongs, fire-shovels, and andirons were silver. A banquet was given every night after dancing, and three coaches were employed to fetch ladies every afternoon—the greatest of which would holde fourteen persons" (so omnibuses are no modern invention!) "and cost 500*l.* without the harnesse, which cost six score more."

The young man afterwards went abroad, and consumed a longer time in travelling than his father approved; but, having sown his wild oats, returned to England, settled in London, and appears, while yet young, to have realized an income from his practice of about 1000*l.* a-year. He attained high professional honours, became Censor of the College of Physicians, and seems to have been a fashionable doctor to people of quality. It was Dr. Edward Browne who attended the penitent death-bed of that most brilliant of English profligates, the Earl of Rochester.

The knight's second son, Thomas, is a more interesting character than Edward. Sent abroad at the early age of fourteen, a disposition frank, bold, and manly, enabled him to make his own way without committing any errors to induce his father to repent so confiding a trust in the steadiness of a boy. He entered the navy in 1664, took part in the Dutch war, and highly distinguished himself, throughout a short but promising and proud career, for ability and courage. His letters display far more spirit and life than those of his elder brother. He is evidently enamoured of his profession, and speaks of it with the zeal and gusto of a gallant spirit to which danger is pleasurable excitement.

"I thanke you" (he says in one of his letters to his father) "for your directions for my eares agaynst the noyes of the gunnes, but I have found that I could endure it: nor is it so intolerable as most conceave, especially when men are earnest and intent upon their business, and unto whom muskets sound but like popgunnes: *it is impossible to express unto another how a smart sea-fight elevates the spirits of a man, and makes him despise all dangers.*" *

All the wild enthusiasm which the father devoted to peaceful pursuits—all the grave earnestness with which Edward plodded on from "boyling the foot of a monkey" to lecturing at Surgeons' Hall—this young seaman felt for his noble and active calling. In him met many of the qualities that form our ideal of the English sailor, not only the joyous daring, but the gentle and generous nature. When the seamen are distressed for want of pay, he says—

"While I have a penny I cannot but relieve them of whose fidelitie and valor I can give so good testimonie." "I am much satisfied" (he adds in the same letter) "that I have got my boy Will Blanchot's pension settled for his life, having had his thigh broake by a splinter in the last fight butt one. . . . . It will be hard to meet with a boy so boald and useful in a fight, though I have another that doeth well. I shall take all the care to bind him out, and I hope it is already done by those I have employed

* Vol. i. p. 129.

about it. His father was chief gunner of our shippe at Bergen, where hee was slayne, and his sonne left to the wide world, till *I tooke him into my care.*"

Well might his father say of him, with honest and delighted pride, "God hath given you a stout but a generous and merciful heart withall, and in all your life you could never behold any person in miserie but with compassion and reliefe, which hath been notable in you from a childe." But our young hero was not of the Smollett school of sailors—children and dunces the moment they touch land. The hereditary love of knowledge was strong in his breast. He reads Lucan "while riding in Plimmouth Sound;" and characteristically enough admires the "noble straynes" of that energetic and warlike poet. The knight, while repeating the praises he hears of his son's skilful seamanship, cannot omit expressing his delight to find that he is "not only Marti but Mercurio." He congratulates him on the success with which he has "read divers bookes at sea, especially Homer and Juvenal, with Lubine's notes." This accomplished and excellent young man unhappily did not live to fulfil the sanguine expectations generally formed of him. After his return to England, Mr. Wilkin reasonably laments that all trace of his existence is lost. "A solitary allusion in a letter written many years after, adverts to him in terms which prove that he had been long dead;" but how and where he died, the editor has not been able to ascertain.*

The favourite daughter of our author, Mrs. Lyttleton, adds a new feature of interest to this charming family. A single sentence in one of Sir Thomas Browne's letters to her affords a beautiful sketch of her feminine and pious character. "Thou didst use" (he says) "to pass away much of thy time alone and by thyself in sober ways and good actions, so that

* Works, vol. i. p. 116. In the 'Supplementary Memoir,' p. 75 (note 4), Mr. Wilkin hazards, indeed, a conjecture that his death was in September, 1667; but no satisfactory reason is given for the surmise.

noe place, how solitary soe ever, can be strange to thee, nor indeed solitary, since God, whom thou servest, is everywhere with thee."

Of Dame Dorothy, his wife, we are assured, by the knight's contemporary and eulogist, Whitefoot, that she "was of such symmetrical proportion to her worthy husband, both in the graces of her body and mind, that they seemed to come together by a kind of natural magnetism." Of this marvellous sympathy, however, Dame Dorothy's correspondence affords no satisfactory evidence. She appears to have resembled the generality of provincial ladies in that day—to have been skilful in potting game, and making a "pretty kind of safe wine;" while the laconic brevity of her letters denotes a modest consciousness of the weary difficulty with which the good lady threaded the labyrinth of grammar and orthography. She was evidently a thrifty and careful housekeeper. She enforces plainly upon her sons those cautions of frugality and economy which the gentler and more delicate father only tenderly hints; and she seems to have been equally careful of the piety and the breeches of her favourite grandson "Tomey." But the worthy pair lived happily together. Probably the plain shrewdness of Dame Dorothy was a proper adjunct to the aspiring intellect of her husband. And perhaps that man, however gifted, has reason to be contented with his nuptial lot who can find in his helpmate 'the staff of common sense, and the pillow of sincere affection.'

The family, with its peculiarities and contrasts, forms a cheerful and pleasant picture. With some little licence of chronology, we may imagine it such as it might have been when it smiled its welcome upon the graceful and accomplished Evelyn, on his visit to the knight, then in the height of his fame. We can see the quaint old house, and garden, "being a paradise and cabinet of rarities, and that of the best

collections, especially medals, books, plants, and natural things." * We can transport ourselves to the principal chamber, pleasingly littered, not perhaps to the taste of Dame Dorothy, with the last received and examined "rarities;"—plants collected abroad by the knight's sailor son—or a relic of the ostrich which excited so earnest curiosity in his more scientific heir—or the Druid urns which called forth the immortal thoughts of the *Hydriotaphia*. Sole token of the ostentation of the loyal scholar, we gaze on that high chimney-piece,† wrought with the arms of the gay king from whose sword the knight of Norwich had received his chivalric honours. Nay, we can fancy we see the grave Edward, ever eager for knowledge, holding the button of the courteous and courtly Evelyn, while the fair Elizabeth, "who passed away much of her time alone," is gliding noiselessly along the threshold. The frank sailor (for we must have him still alive) is drawing for the favoured "Tomey" the picture of "The monstrous Tartar." Dame Dorothy is meditating upon the "shews of the supper;" with now and then a regretful sigh that "the gold upon her daughter's manto gown att a little distance goes but for buf-colored silke."‡ And the knight himself, touched with a green old age, is before us as we picture him from the lively delineations of those who knew him. There he is, pointing to some new "botanicall," middle sized, and plainly garbed, just returned from his garden, with "the cloke and boots which he ever wore;" grave and sober of aspect, slowly aroused to conversation, cheerful and animated when his powers are called forth, and, in the sensitiveness of the quick poetical temperament, *blushing* with the emotion that

* Evelyn's Account. See 'Supplementary Memoir,' vol. i. p. 94.

† "In the drawing-room of the house in which he lived, there is over the mantelpiece, and occupying the entire space to the ceiling, a most elaborate and richly ornamented carving of the royal arms of Charles II."—*Sup. Mem.*, vol. i. p. 92.

‡ Vol. i. p. 249.

his own ideas, whether couched in wit or eloquence, create in him.*

The time has long past when the creed of the author of *Religio Medici* was a matter of dispute. He was not only a very orthodox Christian, but a very orthodox churchman. He clung to an establishment with the resolute vigour of a man who feels that, if he were to wander away an inch from the magical circle, a thousand imps of imagination would hurry him off into pathless wastes, or down an unfathomable void: "Where the scripture is silent" (he says with considerable unction) "the church is a text; where that speaks, it is but a comment." Perhaps, indeed, there is no period in English history in which religion exercised so powerful and direct an influence over men's minds, as the space from Elizabeth to Charles the Second. The universal concession of the Bible, and the removal of that daily control upon conjecture which belongs to the priesthood of Rome, brought divinity home to every man's hearth and heart: he was free to study and to interpret every doctrine and every text. A revolution of faith was united with a great era in liberty of opinion. Men were at once fanatics and sceptics—fanatics in their own sect, sceptics of all authority that differed from it. Hence numberless varieties of belief, combined with stern and rigid enthusiasm. All revolutions are faithful to the spirit of their origin; the Reformation was the triumph of opinion against authority. It sowed seeds which necessarily sprung up into great good and great evil. On the one side, earnest piety, inquisitive knowledge, heroic devotion to truth; on the other, all the chimeras of superstitious heresy, all the extravagance of political speculation. Bacon and Hampden were in much the offspring of the Refor-

* See Whitefoot's description, vol. i. p. 44. "His modesty was visible in a natural habitual blush, which was increased upon the least occasion."

mation; but so also were Syndercomb and Prynne. Philosophers and patriots, fifth-monarchy-men, saints and levellers, all were the distant progeny of the first great impulse which released the spirit of mankind from the thraldom of hereditary prescription. The whole reign of Charles the First belongs to the history of religion. Living in that reign, affected by its influences, the contemplative and eager mind of Sir Thomas Browne plunged itself betimes into the mystical abysses of theology. Perhaps his sagacity was soon deterred from attempts to find a boundary for the infinite; perhaps his tolerant and benevolent temper was soon revolted from speculations which in his day induced the wildest follies and the harshest bigotry. He therefore settled, while yet young, into the large philosophy of passive belief. "Since" (he says) "I was understanding to know that we know nothing, my reason has been pliable to the will of faith." But still, more or less, his sense was darkened by the vast shadow which he refused to penetrate, and under which the age reposed. Hence most of the prejudices that detract from his knowledge—his belief in witches, his disbelief in Copernicus. He imagined the one was proved, the other condemned, by the scriptures; and to his mind they both belonged to that part of inquiry which he thought it no sin vaguely to dream about, but an offence and a folly too curiously to examine. It is thus, we have before intimated, that most of the contradictions in his intellectual frame are to be accounted for. They were those of the age rather than of the man. As from the same general causes came the religious spirit and poetical treatment of his subjects, so also in the universal language of the time we see the reason for its occasional singularity and quaintness. Every one, then, was quaint;—the Roundhead, the Cavalier, the Poet, the Scholar. Each man sought a style and diction of his own; and the general eccentricity gave

a generic likeness to the individual examples. This also arose from circumstances apparent to every student of our literary history. Upon a nation not accustomed to the light, an immense blaze of fancy and intellect had been suddenly shed. Taste was not formed — critics were not known—through so mighty and so tempting a wilderness guides were not received. The common taste of the common multitude is the best critic; but the common multitude was disdained by all. Each man of genius studied, thought, and composed for himself or for the few; and strove to distinguish his toils from those of his rivals, by a consummate elaboration of painful oddities. Writers were anxious to frame a sort of anaglyph for themselves, incomprehensible to the vulgar; and Browne himself exultingly remarks, that, "if elegancy proceedeth, we shall in a few years be fain to learn Latin to understand English." The vulgar could not cope with the scholars; but in the popular fanaticism they found a language for themselves; and the ignorant Puritan rejoiced in a vocabulary as little English and as little intelligible as the dainty affectations of the most conceited academician.

Thus far, in some of his higher attributes, and some of his weaker qualities as a writer, Sir Thomas Browne was the creation of his times. But his calm toleration of spirit, "condemning no man for his opinions," his candid and modest discussion of facts and principles, were the result of his own remarkable sweetness of disposition, and the retired, though not inactive, habits of his life.

Of the force and majesty of his style in its better portions sufficient evidence has been presented to the reader. He enriched, rather than corrupted our language, by an inundation of Latinisms, necessary, perhaps, to science, and, if judiciously managed, ornamental in poetry. The next step was that taken

by Milton, who, not contented with Latin expressions, sought to form the whole language anew upon a Latin construction. Here, as in all fashions of literature, when the last step of the change is made, a new fashion is sure to be the successor. An *architectural style*, once elaborated, remains to be admired or condemned, according to the taste or associations of the beholder—a landmark of the everlasting progress of language—but the writers of the next generation are the last to imitate or adopt it; for them, like the houses of our grandfathers, it is old-fashioned, not antique. Time rolls on, and the obsolete diction, like the old-fashioned house, contracts a venerable and majestic sanctity in our eyes. Dr. Johnson censures the exploded diction of Browne and of Milton; the diction of Dr. Johnson is more exploded than theirs. In almost every age, when *a people* have become *readers*, there are two schools of composition;—the one closely resembling the language commonly spoken; the other constructed upon the principle, that what is written should be something nobler or lovelier than what is spoken; that fine writing ought not so much literally to resemble, as spiritually to idealize, good talking;—that the art of composition, like every other art, when carried to its highest degree, is not the representation, but, as Browne expresses it, "the *perfection* of nature;"—and that, as music to sound, so is composition to language. A great writer of either school reaches the same shore, and must pass over the same stream; but the one is contented with the ferry, the other builds up a bridge—one goes along the stream, the other *above* it. Of these two schools of composition, the Eloquent and the Familiar, the last, often lightly esteemed in its time, and rather commanding a wide than a reverent audience, passes, with little change and little diminution of popularity, from generation to generation. But the first stands aloof—the edifice of its age—

copied not for ordinary uses, however well formed by scholars in exact and harmonious symmetry. Royal, but unprolific, it is a monarch without a dynasty. It commands, is obeyed, adored—dies, and leaves no heir. Gibbon and Junius are imitated but by schoolboys and correspondents to provincial newspapers; but the homely Locke, the natural Defoe, the familiar Swift, the robust if boorish manliness of Cobbett, leave their successors; and find (perhaps unconsciously) their imitators, so long as the language lasts. This is no detraction from the immortality of greater and more imaginative minds. It is the characteristic of their immortality, that, though they inspire, they are not copied: mediately or immediately the spirit of Milton has had its influence on almost every great poet that has succeeded him—but poetasters alone have mimicked the machinery of his verse. He who has really caught the mantle of the prophet, is the last man to imitate his walk. As with poets, so with those prose-writers who have built up a splendid and unfamiliar style;—after the first rage of contemporaneous imitation, no one of sound taste or original talent dreams of imitating them. They are not, however, the less certain of duration. Their spirits live apart in the sumptuous palaces they have erected: Men, it is true, do not fashion after palaces their streets and thoroughfares; but Windsor Castle is not less likely to last, because Windsor Castle was not the model for Regent Street.

There was one other characteristic of our author, which we must touch upon ere we conclude; because it perhaps makes the true reason why, with all his genius and learning, his wonderful subtlety of thought and power of diction, he never accomplished so much as he might have done, and will never, perhaps, command a very numerous and popular audience. Meek and amiable as he was upon single topics and towards single opponents, he borrowed from the

Roman poets what he could not have done either from Greek philosophy or Holy Writ—a fierce and unenlightened disdain of what he calls "that great enemy of reason, virtue, and religion—the MULTITUDE."

It is true that he was too refined and too just to include in this censure, as the vulgar reasoners of later times have done, only the subordinate masses. He acknowledges also "a rabble amongst the gentry." But the error is the same, when it implies a contempt for the opinions, interests, and pursuits of the great bulk of mankind, however divided and classed. It is not without truth that Aristotle likens the Multitude to a complex animal, with many feet, with many hands, with many faculties, with many virtues, each member contributing a something more or less valuable to the perfection of the whole body. And as a picture, collecting only excellences and avoiding deformities, will be found more beautiful than any single original in nature with whom it can be compared, so the excellences of that complex entity the Public may sometimes surpass those of the most accomplished prince or of the most virtuous council. It is true, as Aristotle allows, that so great a compliment to the Multitude cannot admit of universal or even of general application. On the contrary, in every age some men tower above the masses of mankind, often their guides, sometimes their martyrs. We do not mean that good and great minds are to bend to popular caprice, or worship the popular idols. It is their duty to advocate and enforce such truths as they believe essential, yet unacknowledged. But it is equally their duty to do so, not from disdain, but from affection for the public;—heartily sympathizing with their interests, while endeavouring, with equal courage and temperance, to correct their errors. Such is the position and such the character of the most venerable and beneficent reformers of their land

and time. But, with all the follies of the mass, we doubt whether a history of the wise *few*, or a history of the despised *many*, would contain the greater number of ludicrous blunders and melancholy excesses. How long ago, and how justly, was it said, that "no sick man ever dreamt such crudities as waking philosophy has embodied in its systems"! The philosophy of an age is often, indeed, but the condensed essence of its follies. And Browne himself, while registering his vehement and lofty contempt of "that great monstrosity, the multitude," takes from the multitude his sole excuse for his own belief in witchcraft, chiromancy, or the anti-Copernican system of the solar motion.

It was a consistent result of this unwise and passionate disdain of the Public that Browne wasted so much of his genius upon scholastic frivolities. He had no sympathy with the great business of men. In that awful year, when Charles I. went in person to seize five members of the Commons' House—when the streets resounded with shouts of "Privilege of Parliament," and the king's coach was assailed by the prophetic cry "To your tents, O Israel!"—in that year, in fact, when the civil war first broke out, and when most men of literary power were drawn by the excitement of the crisis into patriotic controversy on either side—appeared the calm and meditative reveries of the *Religio Medici*. The war raged on. It was a struggle between all the elements of government. England was torn by convulsion, and red with blood. But Browne was tranquilly preparing his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*; as if errors about basilisks and griffins were the paramount and fatal epidemic of the time; and it was published in due order in that year (1646), when the cause which the author advocated, so far as he could advocate anything political, lay at its last gasp. The king dies on the scaffold. The Protectorate succeeds. Men

are again fighting on paper the solemn cause already decided by the field. Drawn from visions more sublime, forsaking studies more intricate and vast than those of the poetical Sage of Norwich, diverging from a career bounded by the most splendid goal, foremost in the ranks shines the flaming sword of Milton; Sir Thomas Browne is lost in the quincunx of the ancient gardens; and the year 1658 beheld the death of Oliver Cromwell, and the publication of the *Hydriotaphia*.

We do not blame, while we account for, the seeming unconsciousness of Browne to the stormy events around him: if he despised the multitude, he was naturally lukewarm to the struggles of either party between which the multitude was divided; and, no doubt, he would have brought Archimedes and Lucretius to establish the sublimity and grandeur of a philosophy so little disturbed by the roar and strife that raged below. But this temperament is not congenial to practical efforts of mind. Divorced from the ends and interests of the million, the genius of one man, howsoever great, is apt to run riot amongst trifles. Therefore it is that, throughout all the seven books of an inquiry into 'Popular Errors,' by a man of singular acuteness enlightened by singular learning, no searching comment attends a single error directly injurious to the political or social happiness of mankind. Therefore it is that the inquirer himself, while professing to expose the blunders of the people, disdainfully boasts, that *for* the people, "whom books do not redress," his work is not intended. Therefore it is that, throughout all our author's gravest and loftiest idealism, there is something of the whimsical frivolity of a man who lives alone, with no occupation so attractive as that of sporting with his own fancies, and caressing his own conceits. Therefore it is that, while Sir Thomas Browne will always command the admiration of poets,

and the respect of scholars, he will find, we fear, the justice of retaliation in the indifference of the ordinary public. Amongst writers who have won to themselves listeners in all time and from all men, the social principle is invariably strong. They come home to our thoughts and passions, our waking objects and ideal dreams, by the eloquence of a sympathy with ourselves. They have struggled for us, or they have felt with us. Their immortality rests less upon our tastes than our affections; and it is precisely because the multitude has *not* been, for them, a monster, that their genius appeals to a universal test and an everlasting tribunal.

# PITT AND FOX.

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# PITT AND FOX.

[*Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox.* Edited by LORD JOHN RUSSELL. Vols. I. and II. London, 1853.]

THE time has perhaps arrived when Englishmen may regard, not without predilections, but freed from such passions as forbid a calm survey of the grounds on which those predilections have been formed, the characters of men who commanded the confidence or excited the dread of our contending grandsires. Political interests are invested in new combinations of party,—from the eternal problems of civilization new corollaries are drawn, since Fox identified his name with the cause of popular freedom, and Pitt was hailed as the representative of social order.

Statesmen are valued while living, less according to the degree of their intellect than to its felicitous application to the public exigencies, or the prevalent opinions. Time, like law, admits no excuse for the man who misunderstands it. Hence, in our estimate of contemporaries, we pass with abrupt versatility from one extreme to the other: "*Mors ultima linea rerum est*"—death must determine the vanishing point in the picture before we can estimate the relative size of each object expressed on the canvas.

In examining the Memorials and Correspondence of Mr. Fox, recently edited by the most distinguished of his surviving disciples, our eye often turns from the prominent hero to linger where an opening in the group that surrounds him vouchsafes a glimpse of his

lofty antagonist; and strange does it seem to us that so much in the character and career of Mr. Pitt has been left to the mercy of commentators,* who could not fail to misinterpret the one from the hostility they professed to the other. In securing from future ages an impartial judgment, Mr. Fox has this striking advantage, that, perhaps less than any of our great public men, do his actions need the investigation of latent causes, or his idiosyncrasies require much skill in analysis or extensive acquaintance with mankind. It was his notable attribute to lay himself open on all sides, whether to applause or to reproach. And thus, while, on the one hand, his familiar letters render yet more transparent his amiable and winning qualities, and the graces of his cultivated and affluent genius, so, on the other, they compel our attention the more to his signal defects as the leader of a party, or the councillor of a nation. But though in detail criticism may suggest remarks not without novelty or instruction, the salient attributes of the man, regarded as a whole, will remain the same: and the additional light thrown upon the portrait does not provoke the question whether or not it be placed at its proper height upon the wall. Far less clear to the discernment of the last age was the character of Pitt; and even in our day, men, wondering that genius should have been so long fortunate, have but little examined the properties and causes which made the fortune a necessary consequence of the genius. In the demeanour of Mr. Pitt, a certain stately reserve baffled the ordinary eye; in his political action there was a guiding tendency towards practical results, which is liable to misconstruction by the ordinary intelligence. It was his fate to incur, from his earliest manhood, those grave responsibilities which separate the minister charged with the destinies of a nation from the theorist in legislation, who, free to contend for what he deems good in the abstract, is not bound to

* We need scarcely say that Lord Stanhope's admirable 'Life of Pitt' was not published when this article was written.

consider how and when to effect it. Hence, so little was known of Mr. Pitt out of his own chosen circle, in private, that Mr. Fox speaks of him "as no scholar." And few indeed among the supporters of the majestic minister, who cheered his awful irony or imperial declamation, could have believed that he had ever been the gayest of gay companions met to sup in the hostelry of Eastcheap, and vie with each other in apt quotations from Shakspeare. On the other hand, in his public character—so little have his true opinions been subjected to candid investigation, that he has been represented as an apostate from popular freedom and a champion of absolute rule; while Lord Holland would kindly mitigate his guilt as one or the other by the charitable assurance that Pitt had very few fixed principles at all. He has been accused of making war for the cause of the Bourbons; the Bourbons accused him of ignoring their cause altogether. He has been charged with prolonging the war to prop his selfish ambition almost at every hazard; while, fresh from the Malmesbury Correspondence, Lord Brougham invites us to notice how "sincerely desirous he was of making peace with the French Directory almost at any price." According to Macaulay, Pitt was a wretched financier; while Lord John Russell laments that no junction between Fox and Pitt allowed the nation to see "the one adorning and advising his country in foreign affairs, the other applying to the management of our finances the economical principles of Smith and the wise frugality of Sully." It may well be worth while to re-examine a character thus carelessly rated, thus ill comprehended, and to ascertain what really were those qualities which, in a time unparalleled for the grandeur of its public men, raised Mr. Pitt to a power pre-eminent over all. And, although there is no great general analogy between the circumstances that now surround us or the dangers that threaten, and the stormier attributes of the time in which Mr. Pitt

achieved his fame, still, in the prosecution of a war* in which great blunders have been committed and lofty reputations have fallen into obloquy and odium, suggestions not without their value may arise from the contemplation of a character which inspired the public confidence in proportion to the degree of the public peril.

William Pitt, the second son of Lord Chatham, was born on the 28th of May, 1759. Like his great rival Mr. Fox, and unlike great men in general, his childhood was remarkable for precocity of intellect. Of his two brothers, one was destined to the army, the other to the navy. William was selected for the career of the bar and the senate. From the age of six to fourteen, educated at home under the eye of Lord Chatham, all his faculties were trained towards development in public life. During those eight years the popularity of the elder Pitt had rapidly declined. The Great Commoner had passed to the House of Lords. He had formed that motley and feeble cabinet, made familiar to posterity by the exquisite satire of Burke, to which he had contributed nothing save his name, in the defence of which, to borrow Chesterfield's brief definition, "he was only Earl of Chatham and no longer Mr. Pitt," and from which he altogether retired in 1768. Infirmity and disease grew upon him. He was much confined to his room. He had leisure to form the mind and inspire the ambition of his favourite son.

It was not only in scholastic studies that the grand old man encouraged the boy's natural eagerness to excel; it was not enough even in childhood to read and to remember. Lord Chatham early instilled those two habits of mind which call from the inert materials of learning the active uses of purpose, the reproductive vitality of original deductions,—the habits to observe and to reflect. He led the young student to talk openly and boldly upon every subject,

* The Crimean war.

and to collate his first impressions with a statesman's practical experience. The exceeding tenderness which the great Earl, so imperious in public life, exhibited to his son, appears in the letters Lord Chatham addressed to William at the early age of fourteen. They have almost a mother's familiar kindliness and yearning affection, with just enough of the father's unconscious greatness to sustain masculine ambition, and animate the sense of duty, not by dry admonitions but by hopeful praise: "Your race of manly virtue (he writes to this boy of fourteen) is now begun, and may the favour of Heaven smile upon the noble career! How happy, my loved boy, is it that your mamma and I can tell ourselves there is at Cambridge *one* without a beard, and all the elements so mixed in him, that Nature might stand up and say 'This is a man!'"

Such words, and from such a parent, might not only stimulate all the energies of a generous son, but they serve, perhaps, to account for that remarkable conviction in his own powers, that firm quality of self-esteem so necessary in public life, which from first to last was the distinctive peculiarity of William Pitt. Nor was it only by this wise familiarity of conversation and intercourse that Lord Chatham mechanically educated his son towards the adoption of his own career. He accustomed the boy to recite aloud, and, no doubt, took occasion to inculcate those arts of oratory so difficult to acquire in later life—the distinctness of elocution, the modulated change of voice, the bye-play of look and of gesture, in which Lord Chatham himself was the most accomplished master of modern times. It was, perhaps, the conviction that the arts of oratory are closely akin to those of the stage that led Lord Chatham to encourage William before he went to the University, not only to write a play in verse, but to take a part in its performance. Yet more useful, perhaps, than the performance of the play was its composition in verse.

Rarely, indeed, has it happened that an eminent orator has obtained distinction as a poet; but rarely also has it happened that an eminent orator has not indulged in verse-making. No other study leads to the same choiceness of selection in words, or enforces the same necessity to condense thought into a compact compass. Bolingbroke, Chatham, Burke, Fox, Sheridan, Pitt, Canning—all made verses at one time of their lives, though Sheridan and Canning alone, of that immortal seven, have left us cause to regret that they did not cultivate in verse any uses not rigidly confined to the embellishment of prose. Nor did Lord Chatham neglect to exercise an influence over the direction of William's graver studies. The Earl prudently, indeed, left to professional teachers the legitimate routine in the classic authors, but he made it his particular desire that Thucydides, the eternal manual of statesmen, should be the first Greek book which his son read after coming to college; "the only other wish," says Bishop Tomline (William's college preceptor), "ever expressed by his Lordship relative to Mr. Pitt's studies, was, that I would read Polybius with him." But to William himself Lord Chatham's literary recommendations were less restricted, and they directed him to the study not only of the historical and political masterpieces of England, but also of the logical arrangement and decorous eloquence which characterise the literature of the national Church. The sermons of Barrow especially seemed to Lord Chatham "admirably calculated to furnish the *copia verborum*." *

In 1773, when little more than fourteen, William went to Pembroke Hall, in the University of Cam-

* Barrow's amplitude of style is not unfrequently discernible in Pitt. But Barrow's more poetical attributes—his bursts of passionate fervour—his glowing use of personification—his felicity in adapting high thoughts to sonorous expressions, appear more congenial to Chatham's style of eloquence than that of his son. There are parts in Barrow which we could well fancy Chatham to have spoken. For instance, the sublime passage beginning, "Charity is a right noble and worthy thing," &c.

bridge. It was, perhaps, an advantage to his moral habits, and to his undivided attention to study, that he was so much younger than his contemporaries. A boy of fourteen could scarcely participate in the pleasures that allure young men from eighteen to twenty. Even then, however, his tutor tells us "that his manners were formed and his behaviour manly." His conversational powers were already considerable, and his range of study was singularly wide and comprehensive. Even then, too, his habits indicated the bias of the future orator. The barber who attended him, on approaching the oak door, frequently overheard him declaiming to himself within; and at a yet earlier age he had been accustomed to listen to the debates in the House of Commons, and repeat to his father the general purport of the arguments on either side. A severe illness attacked him soon after his entrance at the University, and much interfered with his residence during the first three years, but does not seem to have greatly interrupted his educational progress. There were these remarkable characteristics both in the quality of his learning and the mind that was applied to it. Although not fond of composition in the dead languages, nor ever attaining to that perfection in the elegant pastime of adapting modern thoughts to ancient tongues, which is the favourite Academical test of scholarship, he yet devoted especial and minute care to detect the differences of style in the classic authors; and we are told by his tutor that "his diligent application to Greek literature had rendered his knowledge of that language so correct and extensive that, if a play of Menander or Æschylus, or an ode of Pindar, had been suddenly found, he would have understood it as soon as any professed scholar."

Lord Wellesley confirms this authority by his own, which carries with it more weight. That indisputable scholar, whose classical compositions may bear no disparaging comparison with Milton's and Gray's,

says of Pitt, in maturer life, "He was perfectly accomplished in classical literature, both Latin and Greek." . . . "With astonishing facility he applied the whole spirit of ancient learning to his daily use." Lord Grenville has often declared that "Mr. Pitt was the best Greek scholar he ever conversed with." Yet he had not habituated himself in boyhood to construe classical authors in the ordinary way, viz. literally, and word by word, "but read several sentences in the original, and then gave the translation of them, interpreting with almost intuitive quickness the most difficult passages in the most difficult author;" a peculiarity which evinces the tendency to generalise and express details by the comprehension of the whole, rather than arrive more slowly at the whole through the detached examination of details. Thus his observation was searching and careful; but it was more directed to essentials than minutiæ. He took great pleasure in philological disquisitions and the true niceties of language; little pleasure in the lesser exercise of acuteness that would amend a trivial error in a doubtful text;—great pleasure in studying the peculiar means by which poets obtain effect in expression; little pleasure in analysing the laws of the metre they employed. His mind, in short, was critical only so far as criticism was necessary to the object in view; and in the tastes of his studious boyhood he evinced that preference for the Practical, that strong seizure of some definite purpose, in which is to be found the main secret of his after greatness, and of some of the defects and failings with which that greatness was inseparably blended. He acquired what would now be called but an elementary knowledge of mathematics and natural philosophy. His tutor, indeed, thinks that he would have made a wonderful progress in pure mathematics, had his inclination to that abstruse science been indulged. This we venture to doubt. No test of the capacities requisite for mastery in the more recon-

dite regions of abstract philosophy is established by a readiness in the solution of elementary problems. There are few logical minds which the clear deductions of Euclid do not strengthen and delight. But for achievements in science, as the minute investigator, the subtle discoverer, we apprehend that qualities are required the very opposite of those which in William Pitt shunned all results that were not broad and palpable—employed genius to heighten and adorn the robust substance of common sense, and by adherence to reasonings the most familiar, or appeal to passions the most elementary—convinced the plain understanding of a popular assembly, and commanded the heart of a free nation, which a similar policy on certain measures adopted by a minister who had philosophized more, and felt less, would have driven into terrible revolt.

William Pitt went just so far into mathematics and natural science as fitted him the better for active life, and went no farther. He said himself, and truly, "that he found their uses later, not merely from the actual knowledge conveyed, but rather from the habit of close attention and patient investigation." So also in metaphysics. He seems to have contented himself with a thorough knowledge of Locke's 'Essay on the Human Understanding,' of which he formed a complete and correct analysis. "He indicated no inclination to carry his metaphysical studies farther." In other words, it was the nature of his mind to adopt such studies as could collaterally serve the vocation of an accomplished statesman; to halt from those studies where they deviated into directions in which they would naturally demand the whole man; and out of all researches to select by preference those which would furnish the largest outlines of valuable ideas to the use of an intellect rather simple than refining; rather positive than subtle; rather grasping at Truth where she emerged into the open space than stealing through the labyrinth to surprise her in her

cell. We must be pardoned for these references to certain points in the earlier education and tendencies of this famous man, which may seem too familiar to reiterate; since our readers may thus arrive at perceptions into the nature of his general intellect which do not seem to have been suggested to his biographers.

Thus trained and prepared William Pitt entered into life—too soon his own master. He had attained the age of nineteen when his father died. In 1780 he was called to the Bar, and went the Western Circuit. In the same year he lost his eldest sister, Lady Mahon, and his brother James, of whom he says, in a letter to his former tutor, "he had everything that was most desirable and promising—everything that I could love and admire; and I feel the favourite hope of my mind extinguished by this untimely blow. Let me, however (he adds), assure you that I am too tried in affliction not to be able to support myself under it." Whether from the desire to distract his thoughts from such causes for grief, or from the native buoyancy of spirit which belongs to genius in youth, it was in the winter of that year that we find him supping nightly at Goosetree's club, more amusing than professed wits, entering with energy into the different amusements of gay companions, and displaying intense earnestness in games of chance. Of these last, however, "he perceived," says Wilberforce, "the increasing fascination, and soon after suddenly abandoned them for ever." Indeed, in the January of 1781, William Pitt, having unsuccessfully contested the University of Cambridge at the general election in the previous autumn, was returned to Parliament for the borough of Appleby, by the interest of Sir James Lowther, but at the request of the Duke of Rutland. From that date the ordeal of such temptations as beset the idleness of youth was past.

It is scarcely possible to conceive a more gloomy combination of discredit and disaster—of dangers

from without and within—than that which threatened Great Britain, when the son of Lord Chatham first entered the august assembly in which his father had left many to divide his mantle, no one to claim his sceptre.

Abroad, the condition of our affairs was such as the boldest statesman might have contemplated with dismay. In America, a war that had become odious to the feelings, and humbling to the spirit of the English people, was slowly burning down into barren ashes; temporary successes inspired no exultation at home; a secret sentiment of their ultimate futility made the people echo the assertion of Fox, that Clinton's capture of Charlestown and Cornwallis's victory at Camden "were matters less to rejoice at than deplore." Two years before, France had acknowledged the independence of the American Colonies, and was now our declared foe. Her resources were then unknown; they were represented by our leading orators, and popularly believed, to be far beyond the power of British commerce and wealth to encounter. Turgot's wise warnings had been disregarded. Necker had enveloped the general finances of France in profound mystery, and the boldness of his loans concealed the exhaustion of his means. Here even the sagacity of Burke was deceived: misplaced indeed was the splendid panegyric he pronounced on the hollow expedients of the Genevese financier: "Principle," exclaimed the orator *nescius futuri*—"principle, method, regularity, economy, frugality, justice to individuals, and care of the people, are the resources with which France makes war upon Great Britain."* Holland was already on the side of the Americans, and preparing to join France in the acknowledgment of their

* Burke lived to exclaim upon reading Necker's History of his own Administration, "Ah, if the practice of the author had corresponded to his theory!" Wise was the reply that Burke received from Necker's apologist, and the distinction it implies should be remembered in our estimate of every genuine statesman: "The theory depended on the author alone, the practice on all that was around, with, or against him."

independence. Spain had arrayed against us fleets that excited more dread than her earlier Armada. In 1779 the island had been scared by a Proclamation charging all officers, civil and military, in case of an invasion, to cause all horses, oxen, cattle, and provisions to be driven from the sea-coast to places of security; and had an enemy, in truth, set foot upon our shores, we possessed not, according to the assurance of the Secretary at War, a single General in whom the army could confide. "I don't know," said Lord North with his usual exquisite drollery, "whether our Generals will frighten the enemy, but I know that they frighten me." Meanwhile Gibraltar was besieged by forces greater than had ever before honoured a solitary stronghold. Russia, Denmark, and Sweden had entered into common treaties, constituting an armed neutrality, and maintaining a principle that forbade to belligerent powers the right of searching the vessels of neutral states and involved the pregnant seeds of that actual hostility with England which Russia, at least, almost openly desired. We had not on the Continent a single ally. Nor did we stand only against the great potentates of Europe; we stood against its public opinion, while we continued to sink in its respect for our power. In the contest with America we had neither the support of popular sympathy nor the dignity of military success.

Not only our armies had been defeated, but our maritime power had been humbled. Hostile fleets had paraded their flags before Plymouth: a miserable buccaneer, Paul Jones, had harried our Northern shores in a single frigate—insulted the Scottish coast with a descent—plundered an Earl's house with impunity—spiked the guns of Whitehaven fort—burned two vessels, and carried off 200 prisoners. Admirals were condemning the Admiralty, and dividing Parliament against each other. The Court was supposed to take part against its absent naval commander; and the acquittal of Keppel by the court-martial, to

which Burke had attended him "to witness his agony of glory," had been followed by public illuminations—not more designed to honour the hero than to mortify his Sovereign. Naval successes indeed there were to chequer these ominous prospects, but the naval service itself was demoralized; Keppel, coldly reappointed, refused to serve, other officers of distinction threw up their commissions, and a general mutiny in the great fleet assembled at Torbay was with difficulty appeased.

At home, trade was everywhere depressed; the public spirit, disheartened against the national enemies, transferred its wrath to the national rulers; monarchical institutions shook beneath the violence of party and the general discontent. Language that went to a length which an ultra-radical now-a-days would call revolutionary, was held, not by the populace and their demagogues alone, it was thundered from the lips of peers—it lightened from the eloquence of sages. Burke's famous motion for Economical Reform had produced effects on the public mind far beyond what his sagacity foresaw, or his philosophy could approve. Economy, as is usual in times of distress, became connected with some constitutional change which should go to the root of the evils alleged. Public meetings inflamed the provinces; and so great a multitude had assembled at Westminster, that troops were drawn out and stationed in the immediate vicinity. In the midst of this excitement a motion, to the effect that the influence of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished, was supported by the Speaker of the House of Commons, adopted with an immaterial amendment by the Government itself, and carried, thus amended, by a majority of eighteen. Very shortly afterwards, the Duke of Richmond introduced into the House of Lords a motion for annual parliaments, and a suffrage little less than universal; and as if to prove how unfit were the commonalty for

the power to which it was thus proposed to exalt them —how faint would be the hope of enlightening the councils of the state, by transferring legislation to the wisdom of numbers—at that very period a madman was at the head of the mob, and the "No Popery" riot of Lord George Gordon was raging through the streets. Members of the House of Commons were compelled by the *sans-culottes*, whom a Duke would have elevated into voters, to put on blue cockades, and shout out "No Popery"—the rabble were thundering at the doors of the House of Commons—in the lobby a lunatic was haranguing crowds, half fanatics, half thieves—when the very motion for annual Parliaments in the Lords was interrupted by the roar of the multitude—and a motion, whether or not the peers should sally out in a body to rescue their fellows, was decided in the negative, for fear the mace that should symbolize their dignity should be stolen by the pious assemblage it would assuredly not have awed.

Such were the circumstances under which Parliament (prorogued July 8th) had been suddenly dissolved on the 1st of September, 1780, and that new Parliament assembled, in which Providence had selected the agent for the preservation of the English throne.

At this time Lord North's administration, still outwardly strong, was inwardly undermined. Lord North himself had long been impatiently anxious to retire, and only retained the seals at the urgent entreaties of the King. The main body of the Opposition comprised two parties, which, but for personal jealousies, would have easily amalgamated their political opinions—viz., first, the scattered remnants of Lord Chatham's more exclusive following, of whom Lord Shelburne was the chief representative in the Lords; Dunning and Col. Barré the most influential organs in the Commons. Secondly, the Whigs, properly so called; formidable alike from their number and

their union, the mass of property which they represented, and the parliamentary eloquence with which their opinions were enforced. Never did the Whigs, since the palmiest days of Walpole, stand so well with the people as towards the close of Lord North's administration. It was not only that they comprised the greatest houses and the loftiest names in that more powerful section of our Aristocracy, by the aid of which William III. had achieved his throne, and the House of Brunswick secured its ascendency; but during their penance in opposition, the questions they had advocated had restored them to the popular favour, which the Newcastle administration had lost. They had outlived the national prejudice excited against them by their early resistance to the American war. The public were as hostile to the continuance, as they had been favourable to the commencement, of that luckless struggle. Burke's great orations—in which the zeal of the partisan took the imposing accents of patriotism guided by philosophy—had produced a powerful effect upon the more calm and reflective minds which lend authority to popular opinion; and if the private errors of Mr. Fox himself scared the timid and shocked the decorous—errors palliated by youth, sanctioned by fashion, redeemed by social qualities at once loveable and brilliant, and leaving no stain upon the masculine virtues of sincerity, courage, and sense of honour—little impaired the effect of his genius upon an audience chiefly composed of men of the world, or upon the ordinary mass of the public, in an age that had made an idol of Wilkes. And that great orator, from the height of the position to which he had stormed his way, could have seen little save the coronets of nobles, who smiled upon his progress, between himself and the loftiest place below the throne.*

* At this time Fox *practically* led the opposition in the House of Commons, though he does not appear to have been formally recognised as the Whig leader in that House, to the deposition of Burke, until as a

Nature bestowed on Mr. Fox the qualities which are certain to command distinction in popular assemblies. He possessed in the highest degree the temperament of the orator, which, equal to the poet's in the intensity of feeling, is diametrically opposed to the poet's in the direction to which its instincts impel it. For the tendency of the last is to render into the ideal all which observation can collect from the practical, and the tendency of the first is to gather from the ideal all which can serve and adorn the practical. Hence logical argument is the death of poetry and the living principle of oratory. In the union of natural passion with scholastic reasoning Mr. Fox excelled all who have dignified the English senate. He required no formal preparation beyond that which a mental review of the materials of a question in debate suggested to a mind rich in a copious variety of knowledge, and so charged with intellectual heat that it needed but collision to flash instantaneously into light. Yet an intellect so active and a fancy so teeming as Mr. Fox's must have been constantly at work in the moments most apparently idle. Mr. Fox might have spent the night in a gaming-house, hurried off to Newmarket at daybreak, returned just in time to open a debate in the House of Commons—but who shall say that during those hours he had found no intervals in which his reason was arranging a course of argument, and his memory suggesting the appropriate witticism or the felicitous allusion? He was not only endowed with the orator's temperament, he was consummate in the orator's art; and whether in oratory, poetry, painting, or sculpture, no artist attains to that excellence in which effort con-

Cabinet Minister he naturally took precedence over his elder friend. At the death of Lord Rockingham, Burke, who had hitherto been regarded as the special representative in the House of Commons of that nobleman's opinions, had, by acquiescence in an office of inferior dignity, resigned the power, even if he retained the ambition, to contest Fox's supremacy as the successor of Lord Rockingham, and the chief of the Whig party in both Houses.

cealed steals the charm of intuition, unless his art be constantly before him—unless all which is observed in ordinary life, as well as all which is studied in severer moments, contributes to the special faculties which the art itself has called into an energy so habitually pervading the whole intellectual constitution, that the mind is scarcely conscious of the work which it undergoes. But perhaps of every art that of the parliamentary orator is the one in which the least obvious sources supply the most popular effects. Even the gossip of commonplace minds furnishes a barometer of public prejudice to counteract or of public opinion to respect. The talk of the clubs suggests the topics which will best tell with a party; while every man who narrates an anecdote or quotes a poem may suggest a grace to the discourse, an intonation to the voice, an effect to the delivery. Those, indeed, notably err, who, judging only by the desultory social habits and dissipated tastes of Mr. Fox, conclude that his faculties attained their strength without the necessary toil of resolute exertion. The propensity to labour at excellence, even in his amusements, distinguished him throughout life. "At every little diversion or employment" (says his nephew Lord Holland), "chess, cards, carving at dinner, would he exercise his faculties with wonderful assiduity and attention till he had attained the degree of perfection he aimed at. It was this peculiarity which led him many years afterwards, when asked how he contrived, being so corpulent, to pick up the out-balls at tennis so well, to answer playfully, 'Because I am a very painstaking man.'" Perhaps it was this earnestness to excel, even in trifles, that conduced to his errors, and frittered away his robust powers of application. When persons accused him of idleness as a legislator, it was because he was fagging hard to be a fine gentleman. The exuberant vitality of his nature, like that of Alcibiades and our own Henry St. John, could not exhaust itself in a single field of

ambition. Pleasure was essential to his joyous energies, but he could not take pleasure as a mere relaxation. He took it as an active pursuit, and sought, from that love of approbation which accounts for the frivolities of great men, to wring from the pursuit a distinction. If a gamester,—to be of gamesters the most reckless; if a rake,—of rakes the most daring. With Fox, too, labour was necessary for all achievements. Nature had not given to his person the beauty which allowed St. John to please without an effort, nor to his voice the felicitous music by which Chatham could sway the soul of an assembly. Therefore to be the prince of beaux and gallants in the drawing-room, or the speaker at whose rising members rushed to their seats or crowded the eager bar, demanded in Fox a degree of study and toil which were disguised by the outward ease with which superior strength smiles under its own exertions. And though, as we have before said, Fox required no formal preparation to make a speech, he had gone through elaborate preparation to become a speaker. Not only from his earliest boyhood had politics engaged his thoughts; not only before he was of age had he accomplished himself in the learning which best befits the orator, arms his memory with facts and enriches it with illustrations; but in the zest with which he entered into theatrical performances he was already meditating the effects which art might give to an utterance in itself unmelodious. And Lord Holland justly observes, "that the power of expressing passion by the tones of his voice had, no doubt, been brought to perfection by his exertions on the stage." * But, more than all, Mr. Fox sought the excellence which practice alone confers, in the arena in which his triumphs were to be achieved. The House of Commons has a kind of oratory so

* Fox produced some of his most thrilling effects by what actors call "the run upon two voices," viz., suddenly sinking from his sharp, high key-note into a deep, low whisper.

peculiar to itself that there is no greater misfortune to eloquent men on entering that assembly than to have matured the theory of their art (though they may well have established its groundwork) in any other school. It was his very success at the bar which injured the effect of Erskine in the senate. And had Burke entered Parliament at that earlier age when the mind is yet keenly alive to the finer influences round it, he would never have incurred those faults of taste which so often offended his audience. The colours of genius are determined by the ray incident on the first prism, and the light once decomposed by refraction, no further refraction can again decompose. It was thus no subsidiary cause of Mr. Fox's parliamentary success that his taste formed its style in the House of Commons—an eloquence indigenous to the soil and not transplanted; its beauties and defects grew up together; and, as the first were those which could be most generally appreciated, so the last were those which could be most readily excused. Entering Parliament before he was of age, the ardour of his nature soon flung him into the thick of debate. For five years he spoke on every question but one, and he said he regretted he had not spoken upon that. But his earlier speeches were not long, like Burke's; they did not take the form of essays; they were so close to the matter of debate that the debate would have seemed incomplete without them. Thus the audience grew familiarised to faults which had a certain charm, not only because they imparted to effects that were learned at the theatre, but learned too well to appear theatrical, the air of natural passion and "negligent grandeur," but because they gave to the merits which redeemed them the thrilling suddenness of surprise, and the orator was patiently allowed to splutter and stammer out his way into the heart of his subject, grappling, as it were, with the ideas that embarrassed his choice by the pressure of their throng, till,

once selected and marshalled into order, they emerged from the wildness of a tumult into the discipline of an army. Mr. Fox was thus not only an orator, but pre-eminently an orator for the House of Commons. And though he gave to his invectives an angry and distempered enthusiasm which would not now be tolerated, and which even then was a gross defect that detracted from his authority and impaired his position; yet, upon the whole, his speeches were more characterised than those of any of his contemporaries by the tone of a man of the world, who, accustomed betimes to the best society, can be wise without pedantry, pleasant without flippancy, and is not vulgar even when he puts himself into a passion. Thus at the age of thirty-one Charles Fox stood forth before the public—the foremost hero of an united, numerous, and powerful party; he himself, says Horace Walpole, "the idol of the people," adding to his advantages of intellect and position the inestimable blessing of an Herculean constitution, which no labours seemed to weary, no excesses to impair. Never did chief of a party inspire more enthusiasm amongst his followers, never was political sympathy more strengthened by personal affection. What became of that party, under the guidance of that leader? We shall see.

At this time a tall, slender stripling, ten years younger than Mr. Fox, with no social fame, with few personal friends, scarcely known even by sight to his nearest connexions, with manners that rather repelled than allured ordinary acquaintance, at once shy and stately with the consciousness of merits unrevealed, took his undistinguished seat below the gangway, and under the gallery, by the side of a young Whig county member (George Byng), who survived to witness the passing of the Reform Bill and attain the venerable distinction of Father of the House of Commons:—

> "Abstulit clarum cita mors Achillem,
> Longa Tithonum minuit senectus."

Plain in feature, but with clear, grey, watchful eyes —with high and massive forehead, in which what phrenologists call the perceptive organs were already prominently marked—with lips which when in repose were expressive much of reserve, more of pertinacity and resolve, but in movement were singularly flexible to the impulse of the manlier passions, giving a noble earnestness to declamation and a lofty disdain to sarcasm—this young man sate amongst the Rockingham Whigs, a sojourner in their camp, not a recruit to their standard. He had, indeed, offered himself to their chief, but that provident commander had already measured for his uniform some man of his own inches, and did not think it worth while to secure the thews of a giant at the price of wasting a livery and disappointing a dwarf.

The incident is curious, and illustrative of reflections from which future leaders of the Whigs might deduce a profitable moral.

When William Pitt, in 1780, sought first to enter Parliament as a candidate for the University of Cambridge, he wrote to Lord Rockingham for his interest, and concluded his letter in words by which honourable men imply support in return for assistance. "I have only," writes the son of Lord Chatham, "to hope that the ground on which I stand, as well as the principles which I have imbibed, and which shall always actuate my conduct, may be considered by your lordship as some recommendation."

Will it be believed that the Marquis of Rockingham does not answer this letter dated the 19th of July till the 7th of August? and then makes no apology for the delay, but replies with laconic frigidity, "I had the honour to receive your letter some days ago. I am so circumstanced from the knowledge I have of several persons who may be candidates, and who indeed are expected to be so, that it makes it impossible for me in this instance to show the attention to your wishes which your own as

well as the great merits of your family entitle you to."*

That Lord Rockingham's interest might be pre-engaged was natural, but he does not state it to be so: he implies *preference* for other candidates, but not *pre-engagement* to them; and that, supposing he was "so circumstanced" as to render it "impossible" to aid his applicant in contesting the University, he should have found amongst the numerous boroughs at the disposal of the Whig leader no seat for a recruit whose very name would have been so important an addition to the Whig strength, and who might have served as a connecting link between the Chathamites and the Rockingham party, argues grave deficiency in political tactics. But when Lord John Russell expresses eloquent regret that at a subsequent period Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox did not act together, we submit to him that—in rejecting overtures which, had they been cordially accepted, would have necessarily made Mr. Pitt, on his entrance into public life, not the rival but the follower of Mr. Fox—Lord Rockingham, if never less of a prophet, was never more of a Whig. The Whigs of that day were the Hebrews of politics. Regarding themselves as a chosen race, the privileges of their creed were to be inherited at birth, not conceded to proselytes. They courted no converts, even amongst those whom they aspired to govern. Over Edom they might cast their shoe, and Moab they might make their washpot; but no Tory from Edom, and no Radical from Moab, has right to claim admission into the sacred tribes: in the eyes of the rulers of Israel, Lord Chatham's son was a—Gentile.

Thus, unpledged to any political chief, but imbibing from his father opinions irreconcilable with Lord North's administration, on the 26th February, 1781, Mr. Pitt first rose in Parliament in support of Burke's

* 'Memoirs of the Marquis of Rockingham, and his Contemporaries,' by George Thomas, Earl of Albemarle, vol. ii. p. 423.

renewed bill for Economical Reform in the Civil List. It is a remarkable proof, which we do not remember to have seen observed, of Pitt's isolation from all sections of party, that Lord Shelburne's friends did not attend this debate, and that he was not therefore acting more in concert with them than with the followers of Lord Rockingham. Of this speech Lord North declared that it was the best first speech he ever heard. Lord John Russell considers it a signal instance of Mr. Fox's generosity, that he hurried up to the young member to compliment and encourage him in this "sudden display of talents nearly equal to his own." The praise of generosity is unmerited. Mr. Fox cannot be called generous, though he may justly be called wise, in applauding a young man for an admirable speech on a motion which Mr. Fox and all his party supported. An old member overheard the praise, and said, "Ay, old as I am, I expect to hear you both battling in these walls as I have done your fathers before you." The man of fashion, disconcerted by the awkward turn of the compliment, looked foolish; the boy lawyer answered with equal readiness and felicity of expression, "I have no doubt, General, you would like to attain the age of Methuselah." If we examine this first speech with some critical attention, and compare it with others known to have received Mr. Pitt's careful revision, there is good internal evidence, that not only its substance but its diction is preserved to us with sufficient accuracy to enable us to judge of the causes which assigned to it so signal a success. We can gather from it, first, the fact that the delivery must have been very striking, for it is precisely one of those speeches which ill delivered would have failed in effect, below the merit of the substance—well delivered would have obtained more applause than the substance itself deserved. It is always so in the House of Commons where the language rises above the level tenor of debate, and the argument avoids apt per-

sonalities to grasp at general principles. Take for instance passages like the following:—

"They ought to have consulted the glory of their royal master, and have seated him in the hearts of his people, by abating from magnificence what was due to necessity. . . . . It would be no diminution of true grandeur to yield to the respectful petitions of the people; the tutelage of that House might be a hard term, but the guardianship of that House could not be disgraceful to a constitutional King. . . . . But it had been said that the saving was immaterial . . . . it proposed to bring no more than 200,000*l.* into the public coffers; and that sum was insignificant, in the public account, when compared with the millions which we spend. This was surely the most singular species of reasoning that was ever attempted in any assembly. The calamities of the crisis were too great to be benefited by economy! Our expenses were so enormous that it was ridiculous to attend to little matters of account! We have spent so many millions that thousands are beneath our consideration! We were obliged to spend so much, that it was foolish to think of saving any!"

A practised observer of parliamentary effects will at once acknowledge—that sentences like the above, if spoken, especially by a very young man, with frigidity or feebleness, would fall flat on the ear as the rhetoric of schoolboy premeditation—while, if uttered with warmth, assisted by the earnest byeplay of countenance and gesture, they would be as sure of loud cheers to-day as they were in 1781. The aid of delivery thus taken for granted, the speech justifies the impression it created; the language is precisely of that character, which when well spoken the House of Commons is most inclined to admire—dignified, yet animated—pointed and careful, yet sufficiently colloquial—the beauties it avoids are those by which the House of Commons is least seduced. So with the matter—it embodies the generous sentiments, to which all popular assemblies the most willingly respond, in arguments that take the broadest objections of the adversaries, and do not fatigue attention by entrance into small details and subtle reasonings. More perhaps than all other elements for parliamentary success, the speech exhibits the two qualities which, when present, give repute to medi-

ocrity,—when absent, impair the efficiency of genius, viz., readiness and tact.* Waking thus "to find himself famous," Pitt did not fall into the error by which Burke at the onset of his career had cheapened his eloquence and damaged his position. Pitt did not speak "too long and too often." Only three speeches of his in his first session are recorded; and when the session was over, he had done more than prove himself an orator—he was acknowledged as a Power. The very contrast between his years and his bearing but increased the respect which accompanied the popular admiration. Men regarded as a kind of sublime prodigy a youth so unbending to follies, and uniting such ample resources with such calm self-reliance. The solitude of his position rendered its height more apparent. He continued to hold himself aloof from the recognised chiefs of opposition. Fox and Shelburne alike might sue for his aid, neither one nor the other could lay claim to his allegiance. No doubt this reserve was in part the result of profound calculation. As yet it was only as a subordinate that he could have joined a party, and he who once consents to become a subordinate must go

* Wraxall erroneously ascribes to Pitt's *maiden* spe[illegible] witticism which he spoils in the telling. Lord John Russell gives the words on the authority of Mr. Adams, but does not seem aware of the occasion on which they were delivered, and apparently antedates them. They were not uttered in Pitt's first session in Parliament, but the second, in going into Committee of Supply on the Army Estimates, Dec. 14, 1781. To give due force to the witticism, and to rescue it from the character of presumption which Lord John's authority assigns to it, his Lordship should have stated correctly the substance of the charge which the witticism barbed. Pitt was not accusing the Minister, as Lord John says, "of grave *neglects*," but the Ministers in general of *want of union*. "Is it to be credited," he said, "that a Ministry ignorant of each other's opinions are unanimous? The absurdity is too monstrous to be believed, especially when the assurance is made at a moment when the Ministry are more disunited than ever." Here that veteran placeman, Wellbore Ellis, began whispering to Lord North and to Lord George Germaine, whose personal courage had been so gravely called in question; and Pitt, checking his invective, said, "But I will pause till the unanimity is a little more settled—until" [here comes Mr. Adams' version of the happy taunt] "the Nestor of the Treasury Bench has composed the differences of Agamemnon and Achilles."—See *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xxii. p. 843.

through the hackneyed grades of promotion before he can rise to be a chief. Let Genius venture itself boldly against Routine, and the odds are that it will win the race by the help of its wings. But if it seek its career in Routine itself, it must resign the advantage of its pinions, and trust to the chance of outwalking those two fearful competitors—Length of Service and Family Interest. It is true that the first is somewhat slow in its pace, but then it has ten years start on the road; it is true that the last cannot bear much fatigue, but then, instead of its own slender legs, it makes use of my lord's chaise and four! But if Pitt's isolation from the Whigs was due in part to his political sagacity, it was due also in part to his personal tastes. To a man of his temper there could have been no allurement in the brilliant society of the Whigs, with all the looseness of its wit, and all the licence of its fashion.

Who can fancy William Pitt at his ease in the social orgies at Brookes's, or amidst the gay coteries of Devonshire House, or exchanging jests with Sheridan, or sauntering into the levées of St. James's Street, in which Fox, "his bristly black person and shagged breast quite open, and rarely purified by any ablutions, wrapped in a foul linen gown, and his bushy hair dishevelled, dictated his politics with Epicurean good humour"?* There—where the principles of a loan and the assaults on a government were relieved by broad jokes on the last scandal, the slang of the turf, and the irreverent spectacle of the boyish heir to the crown imbibing lessons of royal decorum and filial reverence from the men whose ribald talk

* Horace Walpole. To which Lord Holland adds a note:—"This description, though of course a strong caricature, yet certainly has much humour; and I must needs acknowledge, from my boyhood recollections of a morning in St. James's-street, has some truth to recommend it." Probably in 1783 the description had less caricature than when Lord Holland, at a later period of his uncle's life, recognised the partial truth of its outlines. Fox in his earlier youth, when serving under Lord North, had been remarkable for foppery in dress. He adopted slovenly habits in espousing popular opinions.

against his father was echoed back to the court from the gossip of every drawing-room and club; there—what figure would have been so inaccordant to the genius of the place as the stately son of Chatham, with his imperial tenacity of self-esteem, and his instinctive deference for the fair proprieties of life? If it be unjust to suppose that Pitt, especially in his youth, was any foe to mirth,—for the mirth of men of gallantry, men of fashion, men of polite morals, he was too austere in his principles, and too decorous in his tastes. We fear that we must allow that in such a society William Pitt would have been quizzed. As, therefore, his private temperament and inclinations were not attracted towards intimacy with the Whigs and their illustrious leader, so, even where at that time he politically agreed with Mr. Fox, there was so essential a difference in the modes with which the two men treated the same questions, that their intellectual intercourse would have failed for want of sympathy. One distinction between them is pre-eminently noticeable: it continued throughout life, and contains much that made the one supported by the people even in his most rigorous enactments, the other deserted by the people even in his most popular professions. Mr. Fox identified himself with principles in the abstract, Mr. Pitt rather with the nation to which such principles were to be applied. The one argued and viewed the great problems of state chiefly as a philanthropist, the other chiefly as a patriot. This distinction is not merely theoretical—it affects the practical treatment of mighty questions. He who thinks with Mr. Pitt embraces for change the consideration of season, and refers a speculative principle to the modifications of practical circumstance. And the wisdom of such view of the art of statesmanship is apparent in this, that, where the politician avows it frankly, consistency is not violated nor a principle damaged when he is compelled to say, "There are considerations connected with the actual time that will not allow me

the safe experiment of a theory to which I am otherwise friendly." But where, on the contrary, the politician rigidly asserts that the principle he affects must be carried at all hazards, he loses character, and injures that principle itself, if, when he comes into power, he finds that he is no more able to carry it into law than the predecessor whose milder doctrine he had attacked as untenable. But whatever may be thought of the abstract superiority of either creed, there can be no doubt that, in action, the man who is more habitually seen to make his first object the interests of the nation, will obtain the greater degree of national support; and the man who works towards his end according to the instruments at his disposal, will be more likely to achieve some positive result than he who, absorbed in shaping his object according to his own ideal, insists on a circle with tools only fit for a square.

It is unnecessary to narrate the events, or refer to the debates, of the two following sessions, till the capitulation of Lord Cornwallis's army and the fall of Minorca led to the resignation of the amiable minister who had borne with such easy good humour the assaults of his enemies and the disgrace of his country. Two public men then stood forth, pre-eminent for the royal selection of chief minister,—the Marquis of Rockingham and the Earl of Shelburne. The first has been singularly felicitous, the last as singularly unfortunate, in those elements of posthumous estimation, which the comments of contemporaries afford. The Whigs have been the chief annalists of that time, and they were as friendly to Rockingham as they were hostile to Shelburne. It is not from Lord Holland nor from Mr. Allen that we have a right to expect an accurate judgment of the man with whom Fox so vehemently quarrelled, and by whom, in the stage-plot of cabinets, Fox was so pleasantly outwitted. On the other hand, the grateful praise of Burke has assigned to Lord Rocking-

ham a place among statesmen to which nothing in his talents or career affords any solid pretension. Lord Rockingham, indeed, was a man whose respectability of character must be not less frankly admitted, than the inferiority of his capacities. We have read with attention Lord Albemarle's 'Memoirs' of this wealthy nobleman, and the skill of the editor has rendered the reading very light and amusing, by keeping Lord Rockingham himself almost hid from the eye. The memoirs indeed would be rendered still more amusing if, in a future edition, the marquis could disappear altogether. Bold as the doubt may be, we question whether Lord Rockingham, take him altogether, was not the dullest man whom England ever saw in the rank of first minister. "*Doctrina sed vim promovet insitam*"—perhaps the natural sterility was redeemed by artistic culture? Flattering supposition!

"Horse-racing," says Lord Mahon* of this favourite of fortune, "was his early passion and pursuit. He afterwards became a lord of the bedchamber, and was thought perfectly well fitted for that post. When in 1763 the idea was first entertained of appointing him to a high political office, the King expressed his surprise, 'for I thought,' said his Majesty, 'I had not two men in my bedchamber of less parts than Lord Rockingham.'" Nevertheless in 1765 the ex-lord of the bedchamber was at the head of his Majesty's government—and that government is entitled to respect for the excellence of its intentions, nor less to our gratitude for the instructive lesson it bequeathed, viz. that excellent intentions unaccompanied by vigour and capacity can neither give permanence to governments nor avail for the guidance of states. Doubtless it is a merit in a sack to be clean, but a clean sack stands on end no more than a foul one—if it is empty. As a party adviser Lord Rockingham is said to have exhibited, in

* Now Earl Stanhope.

private, plain good sense and sound judgment: these qualities appear little in his correspondence, less in his actions, least of all in his speeches. In Parliament his highest efforts in his best days were but slovenly commonplaces dropped forth with painful hesitation. Latterly he had grown timidly averse to speaking at all, and had settled down to the confirmed state of a nervous valetudinarian. But whatever Lord Rockingham's defects, he had the great advantage which mediocrity alone possesses,—none of his party were jealous of him. He had another advantage in the high rank and the immense wealth which invest with imposing splendour the virtue of common honesty, and give to the sobriety that comes from constitutional languor the loftier character of sagacious moderation. At all events he was ingenuous and simple. "His virtues," according to Burke's epitaph, "were his arts." To sum up—no statesman living was more worshipped by his party—less beloved by his sovereign—was regarded by his country with more indifference—or inspired its enemies with less awe.

The Earl of Shelburne (afterwards Marquis of Lansdowne) contrasted the notable tameness of Lord Rockingham, equally by the greatness of his talents and the puzzling complications of his character. Lord Holland tells us in one sentence that "the Earl had no knowledge of the world, but a thorough perception of its dishonesty;" and adds, in the very next, that "his observations on public life were often original and just, and, on individual character, shrewd, sagacious, and happy. I have known," continues Lord Holland, "few men whose maxims more frequently occur to my recollection, or are more applicable to the events of the world, and to the characters of those who rule it." Thus, again, while the same noble critic remarks, that "there was elevation in Lord Shelburne's character," and says, "I have observed traits of real magnanimity in his con-

duct," he lends his sanction, in the 'Memorials of Mr. Fox,' to the grave imputation against the Earl of systematic duplicity—the vice, above all others, least compatible with 'elevation of character and magnanimity of conduct,' and implies that the statesman whose youth had been passed in the frank intercourse of camps, and who was allowed by his bitterest detractors conspicuous attributes of courage and decision of character, merited the nicknames of Jesuit* and Malagrida. The true secret of judgments so contradictory is to be found in this—Lord Shelburne's was one of those natures in which both merits and defects are more visible to the eye from the irregularity of the surface which draws and reflects the light. Morally and intellectually, he was eccentric and unequal. His earlier years had purchased military distinction at the cost of scholastic instruction. And in his after intercourse with those in whom he saw secret enemies or doubtful friends, he brought a great deal of the old soldier's caution; nor where he suspected the ambush did he disdain the stratagem. Of long-sustained intrigue he was incapable; but did he conceive a scheme, he could guard it with great closeness, and carry it by a *coup de main.* The politic dissimulation of a Jesuit he certainly had not; but, on occasion, he exhibited the wary astuteness of a Spartan. We must concede the justice with which Burke says of him in a private letter, that he was "whimsical and suspicious." But the whims arose from an intellect self-formed, arriving at its own results in its own way; and though often changing its directions, unaccustomed to the beaten track and the professional guide. And if he was suspicious, it must be owned that the charge chiefly came from men whom he might

* Lord Holland, in seeking to justify a charge that he can in no way prove, by bringing a nickname of the day in support of its probability, should have remembered that the same nickname of Jesuit was applied yet more familiarly to Edmund Burke; yet certainly no man was ever less entitled to that appellation in the sense it was intended to convey.

reasonably think it somewhat imprudent to trust. Nor was this tendency of mind unjustified by the peculiar circumstances with which he was surrounded at various periods of his life. In early youth he had some cause to guard himself against his own family: in the noon of his ambition he saw on one side of him a hostile court, and on the other side a rival faction, whose aid was necessary to his advancement, and whose jealousies might compass his overthrow. But that he had, as Lord Holland asserts, "a mean opinion of his species," is scarcely in keeping with a political theory to which respect for mankind, and confidence in human virtue, make the necessary groundwork. "Lord Shelburne was the only minister I ever heard of," said Jeremy Bentham, "who did not fear the people." His political doctrines were indeed of a more philosophical and comprehensive character than those by which the Great Houses invited the aid of democracy to the dominion of oligarchs. He differed from Mr. Fox and the Whigs of that day in his attachment to the growing science of political economy. No public man then living better understood the true principles of commerce. Without sharing the extravagant doctrines of the Duke of Richmond, he was more sincerely in favour of a modified Parliamentary Reform than were the leading partisans of Lord Rockingham. But he had a thorough contempt for all the commonplace jargon bestowed on that subject, and rather held popular liberty essential to vigorous government, than the fascinating substitute for any government at all.

As a Parliamentary speaker, Lord Shelburne showed the same brilliant and eccentric originality which perplexed the judgment of contemporaries in their estimate of the man. He certainly did not speak like one accustomed to plot and inclined to dissimulate. Animation was his leading excellence. Often rash, often arrogant, careless whom he conciliated, whom offended—speaking with impetuous

rapidity,* like a man full of unpremeditated thought —warmed by passionate impulse—exposing himself both to refutation and ridicule, but "repelling such attacks with great spririt and readiness,"†—all authorities concur in the acknowledgment that, in debate, he was generally very effective, and that at times his language itself, though generally unstudied, was felicitously eloquent. Indeed, there are passages in his speeches still preserved to us, which not one of our English orators has surpassed in hardy nobility of thought, and masculine strength of diction. "He was," says Lord Holland, "a great master of irony; and no man ever expressed bitter scorn for his opponents with more art and effect." This is not the rhetoric of a Jesuit: in his vehemence, as in his caution, Lord Shelburne was always the soldier.

Regarded purely as a party leader, Lord Shelburne had some of the highest requisites. "He was munificent and friendly," says Lord Holland, "even to a fault; none of his family or connections were ever involved in any difficulty without finding in him a powerful protector and active friend." "He had discernment in discovering the talents of inferiors"—his person was prepossessing, and his manners, when unrestrained, were sufficiently cordial. On the other hand, as caution was not habitual to him, so he often counteracted its effects by a sudden indiscretion. Though so ready, he often failed in tact, and his energy, though prodigious, was rather fitful than sustained. Often a deep, but too much a solitary thinker, he could not act in sufficient concert with others. And the closeness with which he concealed his plans was partly connected with a reluctance to receive advice. With much kindness he had little sympathy. And as he lacked the art to con-

* Fox says, in one of his later speeches, that Lord Shelburne spoke, like himself, very rapidly, and it was difficult for the reporters to follow him.

† Lord Holland's 'Memoirs of the Whig Party.'

ciliate opponents, so he scorned to recover friends whom an offence on their part, or a misconception on his own, once estranged from his side. He was not revengeful, but he was not forgiving, or rather, if he forgave in his heart, he did not own it. In these less amiable and attractive attributes, favourably indeed contrasted by the son, who ultimately succeeded to his honours, and who yet lives * to command the affectionate veneration of all, who, whatever the differences of party, can appreciate the nature in which a rare elevation and an exquisite suavity admit of no enmities, while cementing all friendships —and which, gracing by accomplished culture a patriotism not embittered by spleen nor alloyed by ambition, harmonizes into classic beauty the character of one with whom Lælius would have eagerly associated, and whom Cicero would have lovingly described — "*Ad imitationem sui vocet alios; ut sese splendore animæ et vitæ suæ, sicut speculum, præbeat civibus.*"†

In the eyes of the King, Lord Shelburne possessed two merits which atoned for speeches that, if not disloyal, were certainly not flattering. First, though friendly to peace, he desired to effect it on terms that might least wound the dignity of the crown, and hesitated therefore to acknowledge unconditionally the independence of America. And secondly, though driven to act with Mr. Fox, he disliked him personally little less than the King did. Accordingly, when George III. found himself compelled to choose between the Earl of Shelburne and the Marquis of Rockingham, the former obtained his preference. There were indeed some previous coquettings with Rockingham through the medium of a go-between, little gifted with the arts of seduction. Lord Chancellor Thurlow was sent to sound the Marquis, but

* That eminent statesman, the second Marquis of Lansdowne, was living at the time these pages were written.

† Lælius ap. Cic. de Republicâ, lib. ii.-xlii.

without "authority"—the Marquis refused to treat —he came again—would the Marquis accept the administration and settle the terms afterwards? The Marquis gave a direct negative. The King was in a position that would have been actually impracticable had his obstinacy been such as it is popularly represented, for he had declared in a private letter to Lord North, "in the most solemn manner, that his sentiments of honour would not permit him to send for any of the leaders of Opposition, and personally treat with them." "Every man," adds his Majesty, "must be the sole judge of his own feelings, therefore whatever you or any man can say will have no avail with me." But four days afterwards, a leader of the Opposition was sent for to Buckingham House, and in three days more Lord Shelburne was empowered to form an administration. The Earl went straight to Lord Rockingham and offered him the Treasury and Premiership. "My lord," he said, with a candour little in unison with the duplicity ascribed to his character by Mr. Fox's friends, "you could stand without me, I cannot stand without you." The Marquis was a formalist in point of etiquette—he was disposed to decline, because the King had not sent for himself in person. Mr. Fox and the Duke of Richmond overruled his scruples, and the Marquis suddenly consented to have greatness thrust upon him. The King pocketed his honour as the great subject pocketed his pride, and so, after straining at Lord Shelburne, his Majesty swallowed Lord Rockingham. Exactly ten days from the date of the letter in which George III. so solemnly repeated his assurance that he could see personally no leader of the Opposition—the chief of the Whigs kissed hands as first minister of the Crown.

Never, considering the grave disasters of the country, did an English minister evince a less dignified sense of responsibility than the Marquis of Rockingham—never did the mind of professed patriot

appear more narrowed into the petty circle of party jealousies—never did the diplomacy of a constitutional statesman commissioned to secure the requisite authority to his counsels, and yet conciliate the favour of a reluctant king—so indulge in the spite that must gall his master, and so admit the elements that must divide his cabinet. Had Lord Rockingham possessed "the sound common sense and clear judgment" which his admirers assign to him, his course was clear. In the necessary changes in court and state, such a man would have gracefully consulted the King's personal tastes and friendships, in appointments not affecting his policy, in order the more strenuously to insist upon the removal of political antagonists. Lord Rockingham did precisely the reverse. A harmless inoffensive nobleman held the office of mastership of the buckhounds. This nobleman the King loved as a peculiar friend; with him the royal intellect unbended in happier moments, and, forgetful of Whigs and Tories, discussed the adventures of the chase. Grimly my Lord Marquis insisted that the hounds should exchange their master, and the King lose his gossip. George III. stooped to personal entreaty, that this one appointment might be left uncancelled; in vain. He even shed tears—the Marquis remained inflexible—Europe and America were at war with England—and Lord Bateman was a necessary sacrifice to the deities of Peace. On the other hand, if there were a man in the three kingdoms whose exclusion from the Cabinet should have been an imperative condition with the Whig minister-in-chief, it was Lord Chancellor Thurlow. The imperious lawyer had a hearty dislike for the Rockingham party; he was notoriously preopposed to the measures the Marquis was pledged to support. He was not a man to be swamped by the adverse members of a Cabinet, nor to be awed by the rank of a Rockingham or the genius of a Fox. By office he was the Keeper of the King's con-

science; in point of fact, the King was rather the keeper of his own. He was sure to report every difference, and exaggerate every error, to the Sovereign, who had accepted the government as a dire necessity, and whom its chief had turned into a personal enemy. Yet the same hand that fortified the stables against a Bateman left the door of the Cabinet unclosed against a Thurlow. But with that smallness of cunning which belongs to smallness of intellect, the Marquis contrived to shift upon Shelburne the responsibility of an appointment which he lacked the courage to resist. In giving a list of those he himself selected for the Cabinet, he left a blank for the office of Chancellor, apparently in compliment to the Earl, whose friendship for Dunning would incline him to offer the seals to that famous lawyer and influential debater. But his true object was, no doubt, to impose upon Shelburne the alternative either of resisting the King and mortally offending Thurlow, or of retaining the Chancellor, and incurring the responsibility of an appointment odious to the Rockingham party. And perhaps Lord Rockingham, dull though he was, could scarcely have been so dull as not to foresee that, of the two evils, Lord Shelburne would choose the last as the least, for the Earl had not the same stern causes to exclude the terrible Chancellor as should have weighed with his colleague. During all the preliminary negotiations, Lord Shelburne had been selected for personal conference with the King, and, as the representative of a party comparatively small to that of the Rockinghamites, the Earl might reasonably consider the royal favour too valuable an element of strength to be thrown away, while Lord Thurlow had been mixed up in the transactions conducted by Shelburne, and his very hostility to one portion of the Cabinet might not be without use to the other.*

* Thus Horace Walpole observes truly, "that Lord Shelburne having more of the King's favour than Lord Rockingham, the Chancellor would incline the same way."

Lord Shelburne therefore retained Lord Thurlow, and Lord Rockingham assented to the appointment. That, in the blank left to Lord Shelburne to fill up, the Marquis had no desire to advance Dunning, became instantaneously clear, for, when Lord Shelburne propitiated that eminent person to the loss of the Great Seal by elevating him to the peerage, with the Duchy of Lancaster, and a pension of 4000*l.* a year, the Rockingham faction were seized with jealous resentment, and could not rest contented till they had counterbalanced the Shelburne dispensation of patronage, by raising to the peerage a partisan of their own, Sir Fletcher Norton. If Lord Rockingham was sincere in the expectation that Dunning would be raised to the Woolsack, the exceeding bitterness with which himself and the Whigs regarded the compensation afforded by the pension and peerage, seems strangely misplaced. On the liberal party generally Dunning's claims were paramount. It was his motion on the power of the Crown which had most united the Opposition, and conduced to the downfall of the North Administration. And not even Fox himself more commanded the ear of the House, or could less safely have been omitted from a share in the *spolia opima.* In brief, the more the history of the formation of the Rockingham government becomes clear, the more the general interests of the nation, and the nobler sagacity of patriots, appear to have been forgotten in the miserable jealousies of rival cliques. The grand object of the Whigs was avowedly less to consolidate the best government that could reform abuses and restore peace, than to maintain the dignity of their coterie against the encroachments of the Shelburnites. One-half the Cabinet and one-half the subordinate appointments were rigidly to counterbalance the other half. The Government was thus composed much on the same principle of symmetry as that on which Capability Brown constructed his

gardens. If one tree was planted to shield from the north wind, another must be stuck into the ground just opposite, though it only served to shut out the south. If some eminent man was appointed by Lord Shelburne, some man, whether eminent or worthless, must be thrust in by Lord Rockingham. The envies and bickerings about garters and peerages, and places in the Household, could they have been known to the public, would have lost for ever, to the ambition of "the Great Houses," the sympathy of every masculine intellect. But the most fatal blunder of all was in the places severally assigned to Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox. "The Foreign Office was, in the improvident regulations of that day, divided between two secretaries of state: they presided over their respective offices, one of which embraced the north of Europe, the other the south and the colonies. The consequences were, that wherever a diplomatic agency was required for negotiation with joint powers, the same man was furnished with instructions from, and had to correspond with, two different principals;" * as each of these principals employed respectively a separate servant in an affair which was or ought to have been substantially the same, it is clear that an arrangement, in which the will and the dignity of two co-equal officers of State were perpetually liable to clash with each other, unquestionably required either the most cordial confidence between the two ministers, or that the negotiations to be effected should appertain exclusively to one of the departments. The last was impossible at the formation of the Rockingham Cabinet, in which the primary measures must needs be negotiations for peace with France, which was in the one department, and with America, which was in the other. The first condition thus became still more requisite, and, in order to meet it, Lord Shelburne was made Secretary for the south department, and Mr. Fox for the

* 'Memorials of Fox,' vol. ii.

north,—precisely the two men who, out of the whole junto, most disliked and most suspected each other. Thus to the ceremonial adjustment of conflicting dignities, were alike sacrificed the union of the government and the cause of the nation.

Amongst all the partisans of Lord Rockingham, no one had claim to the veneration and gratitude of the ministers equal to Edmund Burke. His motion on Administrative Reform, and the matchless oration by which it had been prefaced, had given them their popular cry at the recent election, and comprised the pith of their promises to the people. Lord Rockingham's obligations to Burke were beyond all conceivable estimate; they were such as some commonplace Chloe owes to the poet, who converts an original without a feature into an ideal without a flaw. Burke had taken this (doubtless respectable but) very ordinary nobleman up to the celestial heights of his own orient fancy, and re-created into the prototype of a statesman, in times of grave national danger, a mortal whom, if shorn of fortune and titles, no party in a parish, divided on a sewers-rate, would have elected as its champion in the vestry.

It is true that Burke had exhibited, along with the zeal of his ardent temperament, considerable defects in temper and in tact; but those are not defects that necessitate exclusion from Whig Cabinets, provided the erring man can cover such stains on his dinted armour, not with a veteran's cloak, but a herald's tabard. And whatever those defects might be, the chiefs of the party did not pretend that they sufficed to disqualify Burke for a deliberate adviser. "He had," says Lord John Townshend, "the greatest sway, I might almost say command, over Lord Rockingham's friends."* They professed in private to respect his counsels; they excluded those counsels from a voice in the Cabinet. Lord John Russell, with the honourable sympathy of a man of letters,

* 'Fox's Memorials,' vol. ii. p. 22.

allows this slight to one whom posterity regards, if not as the greatest orator of his age, still as the most luminous intellect that ever flashed on the windows of the "Great Houses," to have been "unwise and unjust." But he adds, in apology for his party, that it does not appear at the time that the exclusion of Mr. Burke was resented by himself or by any of his friends. This may be true of Burke's friends—the Whigs, who excluded him—not quite so true of himself.

"In a letter hitherto unpublished," observes Lord Mahon, in the 7th volume of his spirited and valuable History (p. 214), "Burke refers to his position at this time in a tone of great mortification, but with a kind of proud humility. 'You have been misinformed. I make no part of the ministerial arrangement. Something in the official line may probably be thought fit for my measure.'" And whatever Burke or his friends (Whig friends!) may have felt on the matter, there is no doubt that Mr. Prior, in his Life of the wronged great man, says truly, that his exclusion from the Cabinet was a matter of "considerable surprise," and his acquiescence in the slight "certainly hurt his political reputation." *

It must, however, be allowed, that the post assigned to Mr. Burke (that of the Pay Office) would have been the most lucrative in the gift of the Government upon one condition, viz. that he had forfeited all claim to public character in accepting its emoluments. For those emoluments the Administrative Reformer was pledged to resign,—and he did so.

The Rockingham Administration, thus patched together, seems to have failed at once of parliamentary support. The government could not command the necessary attendance for the transaction of its ordinary business. "The thin attendances," says Fox, "which appear on most occasions is very disheartening. On the bill for securing Sir Thomas Rumbold's

* Prior's 'Life of Burke,' vol. i. p. 403-5.

property,* we were only 36 to 33." The insubordination of dependants was notable. On that very question the Attorney and Solicitor General were both against the Government leader. On another occasion Dundas, still Lord-Advocate, not perhaps in the best humour that he was not promoted to the Duchy of Lancaster instead of Dunning, galled Mr. Fox by a speech, "most offensive," complains the minister, "to me personally, by marking in the most pointed way the different opinion he entertained of the purity of Pitt's intentions and mine." Burke himself, not wholly uninfluenced, we suspect, by irritation at the slight, of which he was too proud to complain, dealt a deadly side-blow to the Cabinet that excluded him. Mr. Fox had declared himself in favour of Parliamentary Reform, but, praising Mr. Pitt for his motion to that effect, hinted that it did not go far enough. Burke, with difficulty restrained from appearing in the House upon that occasion, came down a few nights after (on Alderman Sawbridge's motion for shortening parliaments), "attacked Mr. Pitt in a scream of passion, and not only swore that Parliament was, and always had been, precisely what it ought to be, but that all persons who thought of reforming it wanted to overturn the constitution." Perhaps, however, in this censure Burke exempted the intentions of Mr. Fox at the expense of that statesman's sincerity, for certainly neither then, nor at any time, had Mr. Fox any very serious intention of reforming Parliament, whatever he might say to the contrary.† Mr. Fox was sometimes less in-

* This bill was important to the government measures; it was for restraining Sir Thomas Rumbold from quitting the kingdom or alienating his property pending the inquiry respecting his conduct at Madras.

† "Fox, than whom there has seldom existed a more hearty anti-reformer," writes Lord Dudley to the Bishop of Llandaff. This assertion oversteps the exact truth; but according to the concurrent testimony of those best acquainted with Fox's genuine opinions, and indeed according to some passages in his own Correspondence, it is evident that he regarded the question of Parliamentary Reform with considerable scepticism as to its benefits or necessity; he looked on it chiefly with reference to the interests

genuous to the public than he was to his friends. Now, too, the ordinary punishment of those who are over-lavish in popular professions when storming a government befell the successors to that troublesome fortress. Fox had boastingly implied, that, if *he* had the official power, he possessed the requisite means to detach the Dutch from the French. The Dutch received his diplomatic overtures with a frigidity that belied his predictions. He turned to the Americans; there, at least, the eloquence of their advocate was sure of a cordial reception, when commissioned to pacify and anxious to concede. Not a whit of it. The Americans were as sullen as the Dutchmen were phlegmatic. The minister charged with the glorious task of raising the dignity of England in the eyes of foreign states, stooped to sue the Russian Czarina and the Austrian Emperor for their mediation between the parent country and the triumphant colonists. The Czarina replied by a personal compliment, the Emperor by a national insult. France and Spain, though in the last extreme of financial distress, refused to accede to the seductions of the Whig peace-maker. Peace falls rarely into the lap of those who ask for it on their knees. Peace has no force in her eloquence unless the trumpet precedes her heralds, and her flag does not carry respect if it droops from the crutch of a beggar. Just retribution! Salutary warning to those who depreciate the power of their country when seeking to damage a government! Men may justly advocate peace, however unpopular, when they hold war inexpedient or unrighteous. But in doing so, patriots will be wary how they tell the enemy that their country has no alternative between peace and destruction. Fox had so often declared in Parliament that England could not encounter her foes, that her foes believed him

of his party—a change of suit which the country could very well do without, but which ought from time to time to be taken down from the shelf—aired, paraded, brushed—and put away again.

when he came in the authority of a King's Minister with propositions of peace.

But the volumes edited by Lord John Russell contain a document which seems to us so to derogate from Mr. Fox's character as an English statesman, and his position as a Minister of the Crown, that even his warmest admirers may cease to regret that the dignity of the country was not long committed to his hands.

"It was," says Mr. Allen, "one of his (Mr. Fox's) first attempts to form a defensive confederacy in the North, by uniting Russia and Prussia with England, in opposition to the exorbitant ambition and insolent pretensions of the House of Bourbon. With that view he seems to have written the following letter to the King of Prussia. Through what channel it was to be conveyed does not appear, nor is it certain that it was ever sent; though, from allusions in the following year to what had passed at this period, it probably was."

Willingly will we give to Mr. Fox's memory the benefit of the doubt. But the letter is printed from the draft in Mr. Fox's own handwriting; and we blush to think that a Minister of England could even have dreamed of placing before the eyes of a foreign potentate words that so depreciated his country, and so debased his King. A few extracts from this epistle, to which we can give no epithet but abject, entitled "Private Letter of Mr. Fox, written in order to be communicated to the King of Prussia," will suffice to show the intention and substance of the whole composition. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs thus begins :—

"The assurances that you have given me, Monsieur, of the friendship which the King, your master, bears to the English nation, encourages me to write to you from my own impulse, and without having consulted any one on the actual state of affairs in this country. We are overwhelmed by the number and force of our enemies; and however becoming and glorious may be the defence that we count upon making against a Confederation as powerful as that which attacks us, it is to be feared that this glory will cost us dear, and that we shall find ourselves exhausted

by the efforts we make, even if events take a turn more favourable than we have reason to hope." *

Was this the language likely to secure to England the active friendship of a man like Frederick the Great?

"It is true that the embarrassments that beset us are only the fruits of the numberless faults we have committed, and the bad system of policy we have long followed. But it is also true that, whatever be the cause, it is of infinite importance to all the nations of Europe, more especially to those of the North, to prevent our succumbing to the House of Bourbon, which looks forward to a despotism over Europe with views much more solid and much better founded than at the time of Louis XIV., when all conceived of it so well-founded a jealousy." †

The impolicy with which this dishonouring fear is confessed to a foreign power is worthy of the extravagant assertion, that the Bourbons were less formidable under Louis XIV. than under Louis XVI. We can imagine Frederick's sneer at his correspondent's sagacity :—

"We embroiled ourselves with our colonies without reason, and after the rupture we conducted ourselves in the same spirit of imprudence and error as that which occasioned it. . . . . We have had the madness to plunge into the war with Holland without reason, and almost without pretext. It is with shame, no doubt, that I make a recital so humiliating to my country;

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* "Les assurances que vous m'avez données, Monsieur, de l'amitié que le Roi votre maître porte à la nation anglaise, m'encouragent à vous écrire de mon chef, et sans avoir consulté personne, avec la plus entière confiance, sur l'état actuel des affaires de ce pays-ci. Nous sommes accablés du nombre et de la force de nos ennemis, et quelque belle et glorieuse que sera la défense que nous comptons faire contre une confédération aussi puissante que celle qui nous attaque, il est à craindre, que cette gloire ne nous coûte bien cher, et que nous ne nous trouvions épuisés par les efforts que nous ferons quand même les évènemens prissent une tournure plus favorable que nous n'avons raison d'espérer."

† "Il est vrai que les embarras où nous nous trouvons ne sont que le fruit des fautes sans nombre que nous avons faites, et du mauvais système de politique que nous avons dès longtems suivi; mais il est vrai aussi que quelle qu'en soit la cause, il importe infiniment à toutes les nations de l'Europe, et sur tout à celles du Nord, d'empêcher que nous ne succombions à la maison de Bourbon, qui vise au despotisme de l'Europe avec des vues bien plus solides et mieux fondées que du tems de Louis XIV., quand tout le monde en avoit une jalousie si fondée."

but"—(the excuse is noble!)—"the more we have been feeble, the more it becomes the duty and the interest of those who interest themselves in us to aid us as much by counsels as by other means."*

Did George III. call Mr. Fox to his cabinet to supplicate the counsels of another sovereign? But Mr. Fox thus additionally proves how he merits the confidence of his master, by revealing to the King of Prussia his estimate of the King of England—

"The consequences of the evil counsels that have been incessantly given to the King from the commencement of his reign, and to imprint as much as possible on his mind, are at present only too apparent to all the world. But, unfortunately, the evil is only discovered just at a time when it is very difficult to remedy it. What is to be done for that purpose?"†

Mr. Fox, then, with a naïve simplicity, proceeds to state the difficulty of making any honourable peace with Holland, America, France, and Spain, and the greater difficulty of prosecuting against those powers any successful war; and reducing the gallant monarchy he represents to the condition of a despairing suppliant, exposing all her wounds, rending her purple into rags, and covering her crown with dust and ashes, thus bids her, through his mouth, address the most heartless and cynical philosopher who ever despised the weak and respected the strong:—

"Whom then address, if not him whose friendship has availed us so much in more fortunate times; who knows perfectly the

* "Nous nous sommes brouillés avec nos colonies sans raison, et après la rupture nous nous sommes conduits avec ce même esprit d'imprudence et d'erreur qui l'avoit occasionnée. . . . . . Nous avons eu la folie de nous plonger dans la guerre d'Hollande absolument sans raison et quasi sans prétexte. C'est avec honte, sans doute, que je fais un récit si humiliant pour ma nation, mais plus nous avons été faibles, plus il devient le devoir et l'intérêt de ceux qui s'intéressent à nous, de nous aider tant de conseils que d'autres moyens."

† "Les suites des mauvais conseils qu'on n'a cessé de donner au Roi depuis le commencement de son règne, et d'imprimer tant qu'on a pu dans son esprit, ne sont à présent que trop apparentes à tout le monde. Mais malheureusement le mal n'est découvert que dans un tems où il est bien difficile d'y remédier. Qu'y faire?"

embarrassment in which we find ourselves—who has the enlightenment to penetrate its causes—who *alone* can indicate to us the means by which to extricate ourselves, and who, doubtless, recalls with *complaisance* the time when the two nations acted in concert—an epoch certainly not the least illustrious of his reign? It is, then, from him that I dare demand counsel and support in the present circumstances."*

Mr. Fox, then suggesting, with infinite humility, some general notions upon the objects to be attained—and intimating that the first step which his Prussian Majesty could make in our favour would be to persuade Russia "to sustain the honour of her mediation, and to be a little more attentive to the affairs of England than she had been"—winds up by deferring, nevertheless, all such preliminary measures to "the prudence, justice, and depth of intellect" which distinguish this foreign despot; and repeats that he, Member of the Cabinet, has written without concert with his colleagues or with any one.

Now, granting that all said upon the exhaustion of our resources, or the evil of the counsels which our Sovereign had imbibed, were perfectly true, the place to state such facts might be in the Parliament of England, where Mr. Pitt would have stated them with crest erect. But surely no Minister of the Crown—no Englishman proud of England—should have made a foreign potentate the father confessor to the infirmities of his country and the errors of his King.

Whig historians complain that Lord Shelburne was too suspicious of Mr. Fox in his foreign diplomacy—George III. too narrow-minded to appreciate the genius of so judicious a counsellor—but let any high-spirited Englishman read that letter, from which we

* "A qui donc s'adresser si ce n'est à lui dont l'amitié nous a tant valu dans des tems plus heureux, qui connaît parfaitement l'embarras où nous nous trouvons, qui a des lumières pour en pénétrer les causes, qui seul peut nous indiquer les moyens d'en sortir, et qui sans doute se rappelle avec complaisance le tems où les deux nations agissaient en concert, époque certainement pas la moins illustre de son règne. C'est donc à lui que j'ose demander conseil et appui dans les circonstances présentes."

have quoted not unfairly, and on which Lord John Russell, we regret to say, utters not one word of concern or reproach, and we suspect that he will acquit Lord Shelburne, and even pardon George III. No success could attend overtures so abject to a monarch so selfish. Mr. Allen observes drily, "that the King of Prussia was too old and too cautious to embark in new and hazardous undertakings."

While abroad our affairs were thus circumstanced and thus conducted, the Rockingham Administration but partially attempted the domestic reform its members in opposition had so eloquently urged. Considering all that had been said against the increased and increasing influence of the Crown—when the evil was only met to the extent of a bill that disqualified contractors for seats in Parliament, and revenue-officers for votes in parliamentary elections—the public felt that the quantity of the wool was scarcely worth the loudness of the cry. But the measure was bold and sweeping, compared to the timidity and smallness of the economical reforms that had stormed the last Government with the swell of a torrent and oozed from its successors in the penury of driblets. Burke's boasted saving of 200,000*l.* a year dwindled down to a sum little over 73,000*l.* The Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall remained to shame the felicitous humour with which the orator had described their futility. The ordnance-office, the mint, various places in the household denounced by Burke's eloquence, were spared by his amendments; —if odious to patriotism, they were convenient to patronage. Burke had the mournful consolation of reforming his own department. No similar consolation was sought by his brother reformers. If the economical reforms, under a Whig premier, were timorously conceived and sparingly executed, the administration of the finances, under a Whig Chancellor of the Exchequer, was yet more discreetly free from the rashness of improvement. For an office at that

time requiring no ordinary genius, the party of the Great Houses had naturally enough selected a Cavendish, distinguished alike by sobriety of manners and mediocrity of intellect. This amiable nobleman—familiarly styled "the learned Canary Bird"—whom Horace Walpole has unjustly accused of ambition, had, not without well-founded diffidence, yielded to the pressure of friends nobly anxious to place the national resources under the control of a man whose connexions might reflect their own elevation on the funds. The full results of so judicious a selection were not apparent till the appointment was renewed under the Coalition Administration.

We have thus dwelt at some length on the characteristics of the Rockingham Government, because it is necessary to see all that it promised to effect before we can fully comprehend the apathy with which an ungrateful country subsequently resigned itself to administrations from which the Whigs were excluded, and because a due contemplation of the idiosyncrasies peculiar to "the Great Houses," in the junction between the Whigs proper and the disciples of Lord Chatham, may throw some light on the interior of a more recent Cabinet,* in which the Whigs divided with men who were to Peel what the Shelburnites were to Chatham, the honours their genealogy entitled them to monopolise, and have never been quite right in the head since they were unhappily seized with that fit of condescension—

"Nulli sua signa, suusque
Ductor,—eant taciti passim!"

In this brief period of power Mr. Fox vainly concentrated the various energies of his genius. He renounced his gay habits—that desultory attention to business, which passed under the name of indolence—he was indefatigable in the transaction of official affairs—more than at any time of his life he kept his

* The Coalition Government under Lord Aberdeen.

warm and impulsive temper under dignified control. His eloquence was less vehement, but not less effective. Yet even as a parliamentary leader he must have failed somehow in that indescribable yet indispensable quality which conciliates or commands into discipline inert or unruly members. With a government just formed; in the very honeymoon of official possession, we have seen that he could not enforce a requisite attendance. His subordinates were mutineers. He neither awed the House like Chatham, nor soothed it like North. The Commons admired a man of genius, they did not bow to a master. Inferior though Lord Shelburne was to him as a parliamentary orator, and small though in numbers and in property as was the Shelburne party in comparison with that of which Fox was the organ, Lord Shelburne was more than Fox's match in the Cabinet. True, the King was inimical to Fox, but by one of those grievous errors in conduct by which the great orator belied his repute for good sense, and counteracted the efforts of his vehement ambition, he seated the King's dislike to him in the deepest recess of the human heart. The Prince of Wales treated his father with an irreverence which furnished every club-house with pungent anecdotes. In becoming the father's official councillor Mr. Fox remained the son's chosen companion. The King perhaps overrated Fox's influence over the heir-apparent, and unjustly ascribed to the example of the matured man of intellect and fashion, the excesses of a youth who coupled contempt the most galling for his father with admiration the most glowing for the friend with whom his pleasures were shared, and by whom his opinions were coloured. But it is obvious that there was only one condition on which Mr. Fox could have united the confidence of the King with the intimacy of the Prince, viz. a reconciliation between the two. This he took no direct pains to effect; and after conceding all that can be said on behalf of the warmth of Mr. Fox's personal

friendships—a friendship which impairs utility, implicates character, is founded on no esteem, and endeared by no worthy association, still remains a grievous error of conduct in a man who, embracing the stern career, and coveting the high rewards of a practical statesman, must learn to adapt all his means to the attainment of necessary objects, and sacrifice everything but his honour and his conscience to the service which unites the advancement of his ambition with the interests of his country.

Meanwhile, between the Government and the Opposition, in armed neutrality, stood William Pitt. He had been offered by Lord Shelburne—not by the conclave of the Great Houses—various subordinate places in the new Government. One of them, that of Irish Vice-Treasurer, was very lucrative, and William Pitt was very poor. He had too much reliance on himself to accept a subordinate office. He had said so in the House three weeks before Lord Rockingham formed his Cabinet, and the wits smiled at the young man's arrogance. If we are to believe Horace Walpole and an anecdote transmitted to us at third hand by Lord Albemarle, he repented the boast as soon as it passed his lips; yet the boast was wise in itself, for genius is a commodity of which the commonalty of men do not know the precise value, and its price in the market is very much regulated by the estimate set on it by the possessor himself. But the isolated position in which the young orator thus placed himself was one that required, to maintain it, not only lofty capacities, but extraordinary prudence. All those with whom he had voted since his entrance into Parliament were supporters of that Government from which he remained aloof. The Opposition was composed of the friends of Lord North, whose Administration he had assisted to overthrow. Never did any man of mark and repute stand in Parliament so wholly without the aid of party—the advice of friends. And to make the situation yet more difficult,

never in that House, in which the habit of affairs and knowledge of the world seem qualities for sustained success, more essential than the learning of the mere scholar or the eloquence of the mere orator,—did a man aspire to a foremost rank with so slender an experience of parliamentary business, and so stinted a commerce with the social varieties of mankind. Yet here he most succeeded, where Mr. Fox, in the maturity of his manhood, trained in political conflict, and familiarized by travel, by his pleasures not less than his studies, to human character in all its colours, and human life in all its gradations, notably failed,—viz. in the seizure of circumstances, the practical sagacity to which we would give the name of "*conduct*," and by which results that amaze the strongest are obtained, less by violence of effort than by equilibrium of forces.

The friends of Parliamentary Reform, in a meeting held at the Duke of Richmond's, had agreed to place that important question in the hands of Mr. Pitt; perhaps it was the only matter connected with the question on which they were agreed. A letter from Lord Rockingham to Mr. Milnes (great-uncle of the accomplished member for Pontefract), who enjoyed the reputation of influencing more Dissenters and drinking more port-wine than any man in the county of York, shows how much confusion prevailed on the subject, whether in the mind of the writer or the projects of the Reformers.* In fact, the supporters of Parliamentary Reform consisted mainly of two great divisions—the impracticable and the insincere. Pitt treated the difficulties that beset the question with consummate skill in reference to his own views and position. He contrasted the insincere by his earnestness, and the impracticable by his moderation. He limited the object of his motion to the appointment of a committee of inquiry, and prefaced it by a speech,

* 'Memoirs of the Marquis of Rockingham,' by Lord Albemarle, vol. ii. p. 375.

in which there was a marked avoidance of all the theories espoused by the Democratic party, and a very temperate but manly exposition of the abuses he desired to remedy. Politicians may differ as to the soundness of the ideas on this subject which Mr. Pitt at that time entertained, but those who accuse him of deserting the question in later life should at least remember that his idea of a Parliamentary Reform was always eminently conservative. His views indeed are only indicated in his first speech; they were, not long after, made unmistakably clear. In suppressing the rotten boroughs, though he would have unquestionably diminished the Government influences, he would have proportionally increased those which protect national institutions. In every form of government the enduring element is in the cultivators of the soil. With them rests the most stubborn resistance to the encroachments of tyranny on the one hand, of popular licence on the other. Pitt's theory of Reform, which was to give to the counties the members taken from the close boroughs, might be fairly open to the objection that it did not allow sufficient room and play to the innovating spirit which rises amidst urban populations, and is no less essential to progress and energy than a conservative equilibrium, through agrarian representation, is to safety and duration; but it does not subject him to the charge of advocating at one time the Democratic innovations he resisted at another. His views, then, were not less opposed to those of the Duke of Richmond than they were subsequently to those of Mr. Grey.

The Government reeled under a motion in which its supporters divided against its leader in the Commons and vanquished him. "Our having been beat upon Pitt's motion," writes Mr. Fox (who voted for it, but if treating of the Cabinet should rather have said *my* than *our*), "will, in my opinion, produce many more bad consequences than many people seem

to suppose." A little later Mr. Pitt placed Fox himself on the unpopular side, supporting Lord Mahon's bill against bribery and expense in the election of members, which Mr. Fox defended by his speech, and which, despite of Mr. Fox, had a majority of one in its favour. It was withdrawn on re-committal by the rejection of its severer clauses—that, in especial, which forbade a candidate to pay for the conveyance to the poll of non-resident electors; Mr. Fox on this occasion having the large ministerial majority of twenty-six!

But while thus fearlessly advocating his opinions, Mr. Pitt was singularly felicitous in making no enemies. The Government were compelled, and the Opposition were eager, to praise the man who stood committed to neither; and the public, long accustomed to see its ablest favourites going all lengths with a party, learned to regard with esteem this solitary thinker, who, exposing the jobs of the Court, spoke in respect, never servile, of the King, and who, advocating popular opinions, never pushed them into heated extravagance. It was, apart from his eloquence, this apparent fairness of intellect—this combination of courage and prudence—this superiority over the ordinary motives of hackneyed politicians—this freedom from party spleen—this indifference, not to personal ambition but to personal profit—this severe independence of spirit akin to this singleness of action—which fixed the eyes of the country upon the young lawyer who preferred even a briefless attendance at Westminster Hall to the emoluments of office not accompanied with the responsibilities of power.

Meanwhile "the progress of dissension and mutual alienation in the Ministry" made inevitable the speedy dissolution of a body so organically afflicted. The main political difference between Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox may serve to illustrate that peculiarity in the character of the latter which we have before intimated, and which induced him to prefer the

maintenance of an abstract principle to the practical consideration of what was best for his country. Mr. Fox was for making the unconditional declaration of American independence previous to any treaty of peace; Lord Shelburne was for equally conceding the declaration, but for making it conditional on the absolute conclusion of the peace. If Mr. Fox had been the philosophical advocate of the human race, we think Mr. Fox would have been right in his view; but as the minister charged with saving the honour and guarding the interests of England, there can be no doubt that the course he preferred was the more wounding to the national dignity and the more careless of the national welfare. For it was surely less galling to the spirit of the mother country, and placed her in a higher position before the eyes of the continental powers, to recognise the independence of her ancient colony as an essential article in the general pacification of Europe, than to separate the revolt of the colonists from the hostilities of the European States, and acknowledge by an unconditional surrender the defeat of her arms and the injustice of her cause. To abandon all claim to a supremacy for which, right or wrong, its people had long contended with an ardour that justified the pertinacity of its King, was necessarily a heavy blow to the majesty of a state that could only be great in proportion as it commanded the moral respect of neighbours with larger armaments and more extensive dominions; but the blow was less accompanied by contumely if the concession were made not alone to the demands of victorious insurgents, but to those of combined nations and for the restoration of universal peace: while, as to the question of that presiding regard for the national interest and safety, which the councillors of all states at war with others have no right to relinquish for the abstract principle of the schools, the reasoning which General Conway addressed to the Cabinet seems unanswerable, viz., "that the acknowledgment of

independence might be a leading argument with the Americans for making peace with us; but should they refuse peace, should we not weaken our right of warring on them by having acknowledged their independence?" A difference of this nature between Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox was naturally aggravated by the conflicting duties of their offices: Mr. Fox, as one of the Foreign Secretaries, having his correspondent at Paris in Mr. Thomas Grenville, who was authorized by the entire Cabinet to negotiate peace with M. De Vergennes; and Lord Shelburne, as the other Foreign Secretary (under whose department the Colonies actually were), having his correspondent in Mr. Oswald, who had previously been in communication with Franklin, and whom Franklin himself especially desired to retain and avowedly preferred to Mr. Grenville. "That," in the words of Lord Holland, "Lord Shelburne discussed, entertained, and communicated through Mr. Oswald with Franklin several projects of the latter without communicating them to his colleagues, and especially the strange one of ceding Canada to the United States, is clear enough." But Lord Holland omits to observe, on the other hand, that Mr. Fox was not only holding private communications with Mr. Grenville, equally unknown to his colleagues, but that he had been no less privately communicating with the Secretary of Ireland unknown to Lord Shelburne, with whose unquestionable department he thus interfered; and that he had written and, according to Mr. Allen, had sent to the King of Prussia, a document involving the most obvious responsibilities owed by a member of the Cabinet to his Sovereign, unknown to a single one of the other advisers of the Crown. Granting that Lord Shelburne was not sufficiently ingenuous, Mr. Fox, therefore, seems to us to have disqualified himself from complaints of reserve, still less of duplicity. And after wading through all the tedious and complicated evidences on either side, we think

the most that can be said against Lord Shelburne is this, that, in his anxiety to obtain the best terms he could for his sovereign and his country, he sought with too guarded a secresy to prevent Mr. Fox from concluding what he held to be the worst.* Be that as it may, Mr. Fox was outvoted in the Cabinet upon the construction to be put on a minute of instructions to Mr. Grenville, which embodied the whole public question at issue between himself and Lord Shelburne, General Conway (on the ground we have stated) giving his casting vote against Mr. Fox's opinions. From that moment the great orator resolved to retire. According to the best authority (the journal of his friend General Fitzpatrick), he notified this intention on Sunday, June 30th. The next day, after a week's illness, the Marquis of Rockingham died.

Horace Walpole considers it "a puerile want of policy in Lord Rockingham's friends not to have seized the opportunity of his lordship's approaching dissolution to take measures for naming his successor." The reproach is scarcely merited. Lord Rockingham's friends were much too disunited for such amicable preliminary concert; but no sooner did the fatal event compel the Great Houses to elect their new representative, than they formed their decision with the consistency of rigid sectaries, and adhered to its consequences with the tenacity of faithful martyrs. Who, in times so disordered, was the fittest person to preside over the councils of England? — evidently a minister who could resemble the illustrious defunct in his pre-eminent attribute of being at once the greatest lord and the dullest man. Accordingly, within two days of Lord Rockingham's death, they set up for first minister the Duke of Portland.

* For, as to the cession of Canada, no one can suspect Lord Shelburne or George III. of having seriously inclined to such a proposal. It was competent to Franklin to make it, but there is not the slightest evidence that Lord Shelburne for an instant favoured the idea. And he might have very good reasons in his disapproval of it not to submit the proposal to a cabinet in which he might fear it would find supporters.

"True that his fortune, though noble, was considerably impaired; in *other* respects," says Walpole, with unconscious irony, "his character was unimpeachable. But," adds that sarcastic observer, "he had never attempted to show any parliamentary abilities, nor had the credit of possessing any. Nor did it redound to the honour of his faction that in such momentous times they could furnish their country with nothing but a succession of mutes." Mutes! but that was the merit of the faction. The faction had more than enough of talkers, and no talker liked to allow another talker to be set above him. All jealousies could be best settled by selecting a man who might be chosen for those qualities by which no one who plumes himself on intellect ever boasts to be distinguished. The marvellous abilities of Mr. Fox appeared to some few of his personal friends—and, to our amaze, they appear still to the cool retrospect of Lord John Russell—to constitute superior claims to the succession of Lord Rockingham. Mr. Fox himself knew his party too well to misjudge so egregiously the qualities that guided their preference. He was aware, to use his own expression, "that he was quite out of the question;" nor did the faction as a body demur to the justice of that modest conviction. The ruined cadet of a race which could not on the father's side trace its pedigree beyond three generations might do very well to lead the Commons of England; but, as First Lord of the Treasury, his were not precisely the hands from which the Great Houses would feel a pride in receiving garters and gold sticks. But Mr. Fox, on his mother's side, had an uncle of ducal rank and royal blood—an uncle of manners the most noble, of bearing the most chivalric —"of great capacity for business, and a still greater appetite for employing it." The Duke of Richmond, to whom we refer, did not, therefore, like Mr. Fox, think himself "out of the question." But the Duke had two or three trifling defects, which combined to

unfit him for the choice of the Great Houses. In spite of his rank his opinions were popular; and in spite of his graceful manners and a "thousand virtues" he himself was just the reverse. He was "intractable," he had a will of his own; he was apt to have "speculative visions, and was particularly romantic upon the article of representation." In short, the Duke of Richmond was set aside. And Fox and the Duke being thus dissolved in the Whig crucible, nothing remained but that *caput mortuum* his Grace of Portland.

The intrigues of this interesting crisis have an exquisite air of high comedy. The Whig junto having agreed that the Duke of Richmond was to concede his claim to the Duke of Portland, who, above all men, was selected to tell him so?—The Whigs appointed Mr. Fox; and, "being his Grace's nephew, the Duke," says Walpole, with the shrewdness of a man of the world, "was most offended with *him*." With the *bonhommie* of a child Mr. Fox undertook the task of alienating from his party one of its ablest chiefs, and from himself his most powerful relation. Horace Walpole was present in one of the meetings between uncle and nephew, and informs us that "he entreated both to argue without passion, and to remember that, being such near relatives, they must come together again." "I did prevent any warmth," adds that most cynical of peacemakers, "and they parted civilly, though equally discontented with each other." It must have been a yet more amusing scene "when Lord Shelburne was desired by the voice of the party to acquaint King George III. that the Whigs recommended the Duke of Portland to his Majesty to succeed Lord Rockingham." The Earl had previously foiled Mr. Fox's opposition in the Cabinet with a sort of well-bred humour which seems to imply a cordial enjoyment of his part in the play. When General Conway, on whom the Rockingham faction, despite his superb pretensions to

be above all considerations of party, had certainly counted as their own, gave in that Cabinet of nine his independent vote, much to that faction's annoyance, quoth Lord Shelburne aside to Mr. Fox, "That innocent man never perceives that he has the casting vote of the Cabinet!" Again says the Earl smilingly to his baffled rival, "Very provoking, I must own, for you to see Lord Camden and the Duke of Grafton come down with their lounging opinions to outvote you in Cabinet." Accordingly, with his accustomed dry delight in a joke, Lord Shelburne accepted the mission to report to the King the decrees of the Whigs; and, returning, reported to the delegates that his Majesty had been graciously pleased to appoint as First Lord of the Treasury—the Earl of Shelburne himself.

Though the announcement could not have been unexpected, it produced the effect of a bomb upon a company of gazers only prepared for the ascent of a rocket. Fox would listen to no remonstrance; he carried at once the seals of his office to the King, complained loudly of Lord Shelburne's "treacheries," and proclaimed, as it were, his contempt for the royal favour he had lost, or his hopes in royal favour prospective, by receiving at dinner that very day the Prince of Wales as his guest, and allowing his partisans to circulate the soothing intelligence that the Heir Apparent regarded "the Rockingham party as the best friends of the country." Lord John Cavendish alone of the members of the Cabinet imitated the example of Mr. Fox. The three other Whigs by profession, Keppel, Conway, and the Duke of Richmond, remained in office; each professing to share Fox's distrust of Lord Shelburne, but each, by remaining, and upon the avowed grounds of public duty, implying a censure on those who retired. Never before did a parliamentary leader make a movement of equal importance with so little approval and so scanty a following, or upon grounds

less calculated to compensate in the sympathy of the people for the detriment inflicted upon party. "My opinion," writes Lord Temple to his brother Thomas,* "is that Fox has undone himself with the public, and his most intimate friends seem of the same opinion." The blow to the Whigs which the hasty back-stroke of their chief inflicted was indeed so mighty, that it scattered them right and left. The policy of the Whigs as a party was evidently either to absorb the Shelburnites into their own body, or to destroy Lord Shelburne's personal influence as an obstacle to that fusion. The course taken by Mr. Fox transferred to Lord Shelburne all whom interest, ambition, or sense of public duty enlisted on the side of the Government. And by that single act Mr. Fox, viewing him only as a party chief, lost at least one-third of the numbers, and a far greater proportionate amount in property, rank, and character, of the party committed to his guidance. His resignation may have been necessitated. Mr. Fox might feel that he could not with honour serve under Lord Shelburne. But since so many of his friends retained their offices and remonstrated against his own decision, prudence demanded that his retirement should be made with temperance and dignity. Preserving in parliament the attitude of a vigilant neutrality, he might thus have retained his friends, whether in or out of office, while asserting his own independence. But Mr. Fox here manifested to the fullest extent his characteristic errors of conduct. He began at once "an opposition wofully thinned and disconnected,"† and to that opposition he gave all the rancour and vehemence which could justify his opponents in ascribing his motives to personal spleen and mortified ambition. On this score Lord John Russell writes well:—"Conceding this point" [that Mr. Fox's resignation was almost inevit-

* 'Courts and Cabinets of George III.,' vol. i. p. 52.

† Sheridan's letter to Thomas Grenville, 'Courts and Cabinets of George III.,' vol. i. p. 53.

able]," "it must be owned that the field of battle was the worst that could be chosen. Lord Shelburne, the friend and colleague of Lord Chatham, the Secretary of State under Lord Rockingham, a man of tried acquirements and undoubted abilities, was personally far superior to the Duke of Portland as a candidate for the office of prime minister."—"The choice of a prime minister against the choice of the Crown, and that in the person of a man whose rank and fair character were his only recommendations, appeared to the public an unwarrantable pretension, inspired by narrow jealousies and aristocratic prejudices."

This was, however, the ground which Mr. Fox selected. From this ground he fulmined on the Government—in which the most eminent of his recent colleagues remained, which a large and influential number of his recent followers supported—an artillery of eloquence startling by the explosion of its powder, harmless by the misdirection of its ball. He not only accused Lord Shelburne of duplicity to himself, but insulted those just severed from his side by declaring it was "impossible to act under the Earl with honour or benefit to the country." He ventured to prophesy, "not only that Lord Shelburne would still be opposed to the independence of America, but that in order to maintain himself in power the Earl would be capable of that extremity of baseness—a coalition with Lord North!"

What followed is notorious. Mr. Fox himself coalesced with Lord North; and that coalition was first proclaimed to the world in denouncing the treaties for a peace which Mr. Fox had so solemnly invoked throughout the phases of his opposition to Lord North's Government, and which, as a minister himself, he had pushed diplomacy to the extreme of supplication in order to effect! The peace itself was more honourable to the country than that which Mr. Fox would have effected. Lord Shelburne carried his point. The acknowledgment of American

independence was made by an article in the treaty, not by a previous declaration. Nothing further was heard of the cession of Canada. But he who wishes to see the vindication of that peace and its provisions must turn to the great speech in their defence against Fox, which, in tone and argument, is one of the noblest ever uttered by Pitt. Let us now glance for a moment over the condition of parties before Fox committed himself to the formal coalition with Lord North. In point of numbers the new Government was far weaker than that out of which it had grown. According to a calculation made to Gibbon, who reports it, the supporters of Ministers did not muster more than 140; the Fox party was estimated at 90; Lord North's at 120, the Members not thus classified were considered uncertain. But there were an energy and a decision of purpose in the foreign negotiations of Lord Shelburne's Government which had not characterised its predecessor. And the Earl had overcome the strongest difficulty of all in the way of peace—*atrocem animum Catonis*—the stubborn reluctance of George III. Vigour, indeed, was Lord Shelburne's eminent attribute. "I will do him justice," says Lord Temple (after censuring the Earl's vanity and personal arrogance), "in acknowledging his merit as one of the quickest and most indefatigable ministers that this country ever saw." The Cabinet itself was but provisional; Admiral Keppel soon left it. "The Duke of Richmond," says Lord Temple, "only determined to go on till the first breach on fair public grounds;" and (according to Horace Walpole) "told the King that, though he would keep the Ordnance if the King desired it, he would go no more to council." Of Lord Shelburne's own special party, Lord Camden, pleading his advanced years, would only pledge himself to retain office for three months, and the Duke of Grafton went discontented into the country, and subsequently left the Government just before its dissolution. Here Lord Shel-

burne's defect in conciliating those with whom he had to deal became seriously apparent. Only on one member of this Cabinet, except his personal friend Dunning (now in the Upper House as Lord Ashburton), could the chief minister count with confidence, viz. the young man whom he had at once raised to the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Pitt. The leadership of the House of Commons was nominally vested in Thomas Townshend, Secretary of State; but it was Pitt who took the prominent part in the defence of the Government and the conduct of business. But, great as his own powers were, Pitt himself felt that a ministry thus formed and supported could not last. The peace, however necessary, was in itself unpopular. The Government could only secure a majority in the House of Commons in its favour by a junction with one of the two parties which were both convinced of the impracticability of continued war—the Foxites and the Northites. Lord Shelburne was urged by some of his friends to coalesce with the last, by others to unite with the first. The Earl was not unwilling to propitiate Lord North, but on the condition of not placing him in the Cabinet. Dundas sounded Lord North on this head; "but," says Walpole, "Lord Shelburne, foolishly, meanwhile, making the Duke of Rutland not only Lord Steward but of the Cabinet Council, filled up one of the best places with which he might have trafficked with Opposition." So the overtures to Lord North, which were never cordial nor direct, failed of effect. "Indeed," says Bishop Tomline* (a better authority here than Walpole), "as Lord North was fully aware of Mr. Pitt's positive determination to have no political connexion with him, and he could not but know that a perfectly good understanding subsisted between Lord Shelburne and Mr. Pitt, he must therefore have been convinced that any union between himself and the present Ministers

* 'Life of Pitt.'

must have been utterly impracticable." It is true that the more personal reasons which might well weigh with Mr. Fox in not accepting as a colleague in council the man whom he had so short a time before threatened with the block, were not applicable to Pitt, who had indulged in no similar language and received only pointed compliments from the ex-minister,—but by that intuitive sympathy with public opinion, which constituted more than half his political wisdom, Pitt clearly saw that, though the country could acquiesce in arrangements that might strengthen the Government by the support of Lord North's partisans, it could not tolerate the restoration to power of the man whose policy had involved it in such serious calamities. Against an union with Fox there was no such vital objection. If the personal differences between the Whig leader and Lord Shelburne could be adjusted, their political dissensions might well terminate in a peace which secured the substance of all that its common advocates professed to desire. These personal differences Lord Shelburne, on his side, was induced to forego, and to be the first to court reconciliation. It is clear that at this time, as on later occasions, far from not enduring a rival near the throne, Pitt was desirous of yet securing to the Government of the country the only man whose parliamentary genius and position were equal to his own. For the first and only time in his life he met Fox in private but political negotiation—happy perhaps for the career of Fox, had the object of the interview been effected! But Fox's resentment against Lord Shelburne was more implacable than Lord Shelburne's against Fox. Pitt proposed that Fox and his friends should have an equal share in the Government, Lord Shelburne retaining the Treasury; Fox made Lord Shelburne's resignation a *sine quâ non.* Pitt drew himself up—"I did not come here to betray Lord Shelburne," said he, and left the room.

Immediately following these fruitless negotiations,

Lord North's familiar friend Mr. Adam, indignant at the idea that Lord North should be excluded from the Cabinet that was left open to his friends, got into communication, through George North the ex-Minister's son, with Fox's familiar friend Lord John Townshend. "These three (writes Lord John to Lord Holland in 1830) laid their heads together." "Fitzpatrick's aid was invaluable;" Sheridan was "eager and clamorous" for the junction; Burke was not adverse. Beyond this (and we rejoice to find that Burke's share in the intrigue has been so much exaggerated) Burke had no great hand in the work; "and," adds Lord John, "it was lucky, as we thought, that he had not, as he might in any day have marred everything, according to custom, in some wrong-headed fit of intemperance." Thus three men, of mark in their little day, but exceedingly obscure to posterity, made up the notorious Coalition between Fox and North, of which the ultimate consequences were the annihilation of the North party, the decimation and discredit of the Whig, and the formation of that vast parliamentary majority,—founded on the ruins of the one, swelled by the seceders from the other,—which so long maintained the destinies of England in the hands of Mr. Pitt.

Against the morality of the Coalition so much has been said, that we may be saved the necessity of reiterating austere homilies on a worn-out text. But we must frankly own, that the apologists for Mr. Fox have in this instance laid too much stress on the placability of his disposition. For if he forgot his old resentment against Lord North, it was to gratify his new resentment against Lord Shelburne. It was the sacrifice of one revenge for the prosecution of another. And his real excuse is not to be sought in the forgiving sweetness of his temper, but in that fervour of passion which too often blinds judgment by the very fire that it gives to genius. From a great flame goes a great smoke.

But, accepting all that can mitigate the political sin of the Fox and North Coalition, it remains not the less grave as a political blunder on the part of Mr. Fox. It is difficult to conceive how a people could ever have been wisely governed by a statesman who could so egregiously miscalculate the directions of public opinion. Nor could a party fail to decrease rapidly in power and importance that appeared to the community to renounce all the recognised principles of political action in order to subserve the ambition of a chief whose very genius only rendered more alarming to the safety of the commonwealth the unscrupulous appliance of his means to the naked audacity of his ends.

But whatever the ultimate effect of the coalition, it obtained Fox's immediate object—it drove Shelburne from power; and he who had declared when opposing Lord North that "peace upon any terms—peace for a year, for a month, for a day—was indispensable under the present circumstances of the country," joined with Lord North in condemning the successful negotiator of a peace, of which Lord Temple, no partial friend to Lord Shelburne, speaks "as the most meritorious and happiest event for a kingdom exhausted of men and of credit." "By my absence in Ireland and my little connection with Lord Shelburne I was enabled," adds Lord Temple, "to judge of it with coolness and impartiality, and, from the knowlege of the various difficulties attending it, I am convinced better terms could not have been had." *

It was evidently the hope of the Coalition to detach Pitt from Shelburne. North, in replying to Pitt's speech against the resolutions by which Lord John Cavendish implied his censure of the Government, pointedly said that "he saw no reason why the carrying of the present motion should drive Mr. Pitt from the service of his country." Fox up to this

* 'Courts and Cabinets of George III.,' vol. i. p. 302.

moment had also taken occasion to compliment Pitt at the expense of Shelburne. So exclusively personal towards the chief minister was the attack of the Coalition, that, when Lord Shelburne resigned, the King, on the plea injudiciously left to him "that Lord Shelburne was the only person in whom the House of Commons had shown a want of confidence," baulked the expectations of the victors, and startled all parties, by offering the Treasury to Pitt with full powers to nominate his colleagues.

In the secret diplomacy of parties a man whose name henceforth became closely associated with that of Pitt had lately taken a very active part. Henry Dundas, then in his forty-third year, is thus characterised by Lord Brougham, in one of those Sketches which, whatever our several impressions in particular instances as to the perfect accuracy of the colouring, are not less valuable specimens of a great artist's skill in composition. "Henry Dundas (afterwards Lord Melville) was a plain business-like speaker; a clear, easy, fluent, and—from much practice as well as strong natural sense—a skilful debater." To this we may add, that, if the effect of his speeches was somewhat marred by a broad Scotch accent, so on the other hand it was favoured by the advantages of a comely countenance and imposing person. He understood well the *system* of business— uniting industry in details with the facility of generalisation; his temperament was buoyant, his manners were pleasing. No man more agreeable could be met in the byeways of political life. The austerest member on the opposite side could enjoy his laugh in the lobby or share his bottle at Bellamy's. To qualities so fitted to rise in life, Henry Dundas added the profound determination to do so. He grafted his talents on the healthiest fruit-trees, and trained them with due care on the sunny side of the wall. Lord Advocate under North's Administration, and one of the most zealous defenders of the American war while the war was

popular, with intuitive sagacity he saw in season the necessity of adapting his opinions to the vicissitudes of time. By a sort of magnetism kindred to this happy clairvoyance he was attracted towards Mr. Pitt, on the very first appearance of the latter as the opponent of the Government of which Dundas was the partisan and member. In reply to a speech against Ministers made by Pitt in his maiden session, Dundas said,—

"The Honourable Gentleman who spoke last claims *my particular approbation.* I find myself compelled to rejoice in the good fortune of my country and my fellow-subjects, who are destined at some future day to derive the most important services from so happy an union of first-rate abilities, high integrity, bold and honest independency of conduct, and the most precocious eloquence."

By a dexterity that was really admirable in its way, the Lord Advocate contrived to glide so easily from Lord North's Administration into Lord Rockingham's that he really heightened his character in retaining his office. With a penetrating eye that comprehended in a glance the welfare of Great Britain and the interests of Henry Dundas, this profound politician perceived the faults in Mr. Fox that rendered it more likely that the genius of that statesman would adorn an Opposition than maintain a Government. Accordingly we have seen that, while in the Rockingham Administration, and nominally under the lead of Mr. Fox, he still turned his prophetic inclinations towards Mr. Pitt, and made a marked distinction in "purity of intention" between the young man who spoke on the opposite side of the House and the leader on the Treasury Bench. From Lord Rockingham's Administration he slid into Lord Shelburne's with a yet easier grace than that with which he had glided from Lord North's into Lord Rockingham's. Anxious to preserve his office and his country, Dundas then became the zealous but unsuccessful negotiator in the attempt to secure to

Lord Shelburne the support of Lord North. Some little time before retiring from power, but when its necessity was evident, Lord Shelburne sent to Dundas, and said to him, with that courtly combination of cynicism and loftiness which often distinguished the Earl in his commerce with mankind, "Did you ever hear the story of the Duke of Perth?" "No," said Dundas. "Then I will tell it you. The Duke of Perth had a country neighbour and friend who came to him one morning with a white cockade in his hat. 'What is the meaning of this?' asked the Duke. 'I wish to show your Grace,' replied his country friend, 'that I am resolved to follow your fortunes.' The Duke snatched the hat from his head, took the cockade out of it, and threw it into the fire, saying, 'My situation and duty compel me to take this line, but that is no reason why you should ruin yourself and your family.' I find," continued Lord Shelburne, "it will now be necessary for me to quit the government, but as you are beloved by all parties I wished you to have early notice of it, that you might be prepared for what must happen!"

The Lord Advocate *was* prepared not to ruin himself and his family. And he it was who, on Lord Shelburne's final overthrow, "being," says Horace Walpole, "one of the boldest of men, proposed to the King to send for the very young Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Pitt, not yet past 23"—he it was who strained all the efforts of his eloquent experience to induce William Pitt to accept the offer, and, in order to give the more time for reflection, he it was who moved the adjournment of the House for three days. "By far the greater number of the friends whom Pitt consulted," says Bishop Tomline, "advised him to accept the offer." Pitt never more evinced that fine judgment which Lord Bacon calls "the wisdom of business," than when he declined. Again the King, most loth to humble himself to what he called "a faction," entreated Pitt to retract

his determination. But Pitt remained immovable. He understood the King's interest better than his Majesty did. The Coalition must be tried in office before it could be safe for the monarchy to hazard that most delicate and critical of all political questions which lies involved in the constitutional prerogative of the King to choose his ministers, and the attempt of ministers so chosen to govern the country, even for a time, against a majority in the House of Commons. "The King," said the dutiful heir-apparent, whose friendship Mr. Fox so dearly purchased, "has not yet agreed to the plan of the Coalition, but by G— he shall be made to agree to it."

The royal prediction was verified; the Duke of Portland became chief minister under Lord North and Mr. Fox.

In quitting office—with powers so acknowledged, and an ambition so flatteringly caressed—we might suppose, according to ordinary parliamentary precedents, that Mr. Pitt would have become the recognized leader of Opposition. He pointedly renounced all assumption to that post. Before the new ministry was formed, he declared with emphasis that "he was unconnected with any party whatever; that he should keep himself reserved, and act with whichever side he thought did right." He soon showed his independence of the main body in opposition by renewing in more detail his motion on Parliamentary Reform. It was lost by a much larger majority than the former one, owing, it was said, "to the increased influence of Lord North, as Secretary of State"—a proof how little Fox had advanced the principles he professed by the coalition in which he had gratified his personal ambition and private resentment. Nor would Pitt join with the majority of the Opposition in the popular clamour against a tax on receipts; though on another occasion he unsparingly exposed the waste and profligacy of a loan by which, according to Lord Shelburne, the public lost 650,000*l.*, which was negotiated in private

on the same principle which Lord North had adopted and the Whigs denounced; which gave a bonus of six per cent. to the lenders, and rose with a rapidity that startled the upward eyes on Exchange to a premium of eight. But the Great Houses had again placed the finances of the country in the well-bred hands of Lord John Cavendish; and it is no matter of surprise that the 3 per cent. Consols, which in March were at 70, fell to 56 in the following December, just before the country lost the services of that estimable nobleman. The public paid dear for the whistle of the "learned Canary Bird." It was in thus standing aloof from party that Pitt continued to concentre on himself the hopes of the country, with which every party had lost ground. Had Pitt avowedly become leader of an Opposition in which the former supporters of the North Administration—angry with the Coalition—made the more prominent section, his position would have lost that character of independence and liberality which rendered it so popular. He must have foreseen that, when the occasion came for concert, the various malcontents would rally round him. All wrecks come to the shore—but only in crumbling away can the shore drift to the wrecks. Thus, still standing alone, Pitt was the better enabled to appear before the public as the adviser of practical reforms emanating from himself, and unembarrassed by complaisance to the antecedents of those who had supported abuses under previous Governments. He introduced a bill for the more economical regulation of the public offices, which the Whig Chancellor of the Exchequer opposed upon the ground, "that, if abuses did exist, the heads of the offices might reform them." Ministers did not, however, dare to divide against the bill in the Commons; but they united to throw it out in the Lords. Decidedly in the Coalition the old North principles had a full proportion of influence. But Mr. Fox, who had complained so much of Cabinet dissensions when

acting with Shelburne, is silent as to any differences in acting with North; on the contrary, he speaks only of the gratitude due to Lord North's "very handsome conduct," and of the concord between himself and that distinguished High Tory upon all practical questions.

Parliament, prorogued on the 16th of July, left the Coalition unscathed, and in September Pitt went abroad for the first and only time of his life: his companions were Eliot and Wilberforce. With the more eminent of these two accomplished men Pitt had formed a friendship which at that period in the lives of both was endeared by congenial habits and kindred sympathies. They were of the same age—born within three months of each other,—both accomplished scholars, neither of them professedly a bookman. Both had high animal spirits; though, Pitt's finding their usual vent in political conflict, Wilberforce had more ready gaiety to spend in general society. Mirth in each had a singular character of freshness and innocence—almost feminine with Wilberforce, at times quite boyish with Pitt. Speaking of one of Pitt's visits to him at Wimbledon, at the date when his friend was Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Shelburne, Wilberforce says, "We found the fruits of Pitt's earlier rising in the careful sowing of the garden-beds with the fragments of a dress-hat, in which Ryder had over-night come down from the Opera." The acquaintance between these two young men had commenced at Cambridge, had become more intimate in the gallery of the House of Commons, where both often sat as observant strangers before they became actors of such mark upon the stage. They grew yet more intimate at Goosetree's Club, while Pitt yet played with "intense earnestness" at games of chance; or at the Boar's Head, Eastcheap, in memory of Shakspeare, where Pitt was "the most amusing of the party." Wilberforce entered the House as member for Hull, at the general election, a

few months before Pitt. Lord Rockingham had declined the overtures of the one; he strained all his interest in Yorkshire against the other. The decided action and popular sentiments of Pitt often separated them on divisions; and it was not till the Shelburne government that they became politically united. During that administration, Pitt, "to whom it was a luxury even to sleep in country air," frequently visited Wilberforce at his villa; and thither did he joyously repair when he resigned his residence in Downing Street to the Coalition Ministry "Eliot, Arden, and I," wrote Pitt one afternoon, "will be with you before curfew, and expect an early meal of peas and strawberries."

Wilberforce had already distinguished himself as a speaker in parliament. He had seconded Pitt on the address to the Throne under the Shelburne Government; he had denounced the Coalition with a vehemence equal to his friend's. Of all Pitt's associates there was not one who at that time appeared more likely, from congenial character, sentiments, and intellect, to share in the honours of his political career. But Providence destined them to promote noble ends, in directions that diverged by the way: the one advancing human interests in the more exclusive service of his country; the other adorning his country, and elevating its moral standard, by a more special devotion to the cause of catholic humanity.

The three travellers crossed over to Calais, and proceeded straight to Rheims, "to gain some knowledge of the language before they went to Paris." The intendent of the police regarded them as very suspicious characters. Their courier represented them as "grands seigneurs;" "and yet," said the shrewd functionary, "they are in a wretched lodging, and have no attendance. They must be *des intrigants.*" Fortunately these unfavourable impressions were communicated to a French abbé, "a fellow of infinite humour," who was secretary to the Conseil d'Etat,

under the Archbishop of Périgord. "Satisfied," as the abbé said, "with their appearance," he offered them every civility which the politeness of his nation could suggest; made them acquainted with the noblesse in the neighbourhood; and introduced them to a familiar footing at the episcopal palace. Pitt here evinced that remarkable quickness of perception which gave to his youth the advantages usually confined to experience. "Though no master of the French vocabulary, he caught readily the intonations of the language, and soon spoke it with considerable accuracy."

Two of his reputed sayings at this time are worth citing. "I am greatly surprised," said the abbé, "that a country so moral as England can submit to be governed by a man so wanting in private character as Fox. It seems to show you to be less moral than you appear." "*C'est que vous n'avez pas été sous la baguette du magicien*," was Pitt's happy reply; "but the remark," he continued, "is just." Another time the abbé asked him, in what part the British Constitution might be first expected to decay. Pitt, musing for a moment, answered, "The part of our Constitution which will first perish is the prerogative of the King and the authority of the House of Peers." The answer is profound; and though the circumstances of that time might favour the conjecture more than those of the present, yet, no doubt, in the ordinary progress of civilization, the vitality of the moving body endures longer than the checks on its action. Rarely does the bridle last as long as the horse! But this reply, made at the time when Pitt was a parliamentary reformer, and desired, by the mode of his reform, to give more preponderance to the conservative scale in the balance of representative government, may serve to explain the motives of his policy in later life, when he deemed it necessary to carry all his genius to the preservation of the weaker powers in the State. For though Crown and Peers may go first, if ever the

harmonious elements of the English constitution are condemned to dissolution, popular freedom may go very soon afterwards. In states highly civilized the fears of property soon determine any contest between political liberty and civil order in favour of the last. Remove a king, and the odds are that you create a dictator; destroy an aristocracy, and between throne and mob—between wealth and penury—between thief and till—what do order and property invoke to their aid? The answer is brief—an army! In every European community soldiers appear in proportion as aristocracy recedes. And just it is, in refutation of the charge of inconsistency brought against Pitt at a subsequent period, to state that it was at this date, when he most favoured Parliamentary reform, that Franklin, conversing with him on forms of government, was equally surprised by his talents and his anti-republican opinions.*

The three friends proceeded to Paris, and thence to the Court at Fontainebleau. At this tmie Horace Walpole is said to have tried "to get up a match" between William Pitt and Necker's daughter, afterwards so famous as Madame de Staël. It is even asserted that the Genevese offered to endow the young lady with a fortune of 14,000*l.* a-year. Happily, perhaps, for his domestic peace, Pitt was not tempted. He replied, probably in jest, that he was already married to his country.† The subsequent entries in Wilberforce's diary are curious:—

"Introduced to King, Queen, Monsieur, Madame, Comte and Comtesse d'Artois, and two aunts. Pitt stag-hunting! Eliot and I in chace to see the King—clumsy, strange figure, in immense boots! Dined. Marquis de la Fayette—pleasing enthusiastical man. They all, men and women" (writes Wilberforce to Henry

* Lord Holland's 'Memoirs of the Whig Party,' vol. ii. p. 262.

† Lord Brougham (Sketch of Pitt) says that the story of his refusing to marry Mademoiselle de Necker rests on a true foundation, but, unless the answer was in jest, which is very possible, it was too theatrical for so great a man. We agree with Lord Brougham.



Bankes), "crowded round Pitt in shoals, and he behaved with great spirit, though he was sometimes a little bored when they talked to him about the parliamentary reform."

In the midst of these courtly gaieties Pitt was recalled to London, by a special messenger, despatched by whom or for what object does not appear. Assuming the latter to be political, it seems evident that Pitt on his return to England did not see the probability of his own speedy accession to power; for at this period he seriously determined to resume the profession of the law, as the only plan he could adopt to preserve "that independence which he had resolved never to forfeit."* Indeed, the Coalition Administration had gained strength merely by living on. Though the discontent of the King remained unsoftened, it assumed the character of despondency. He said in private that, "though he disliked ministers, he would give them fair play." In a confidential letter to Lord Northington, Fox writes that—

"The King has no inclination to do anything to serve us or to hurt us; and I believe that he has no view to any other administration which he means to substitute in lieu of us. . . . . Our lasting out the summer will prove that his dislike is not such as to proceed to overt acts. Parliament is certainly our strong place; and if we can last during the recess, I think people will have little doubt of our lasting during the session. When I look over our strength in the House of Commons, and see that all hopes of dissension are given up even by the enemy, while on the other hand Shelburne, Temple, Thurlow, and Pitt, are some of them quite unmanageable, and have, to my certain knowledge, hardly any communication with each other, I cannot help thinking the fear of our being overturned in parliament is quite chimerical."

The Ministry indeed were strong by union within the Cabinet, by a large majority in the Commons, by the motley and divided nature of the Opposition, and above all by the apparent impossibility to form any other Government. The Whigs thought the Coalition

* Tomline's 'Life of Pitt,' chap. iii.

had ceased to be unpopular; that supposition, as events proved, was incorrect.

And during this short interval of power Fox himself appears to brilliant advantage. With the firmness which Rockingham had wanted, he insisted on excluding Thurlow from his Cabinet. He turned out the Lord Advocate Dundas, who would have stayed in if he could, though he had before emphatically declared his resolve "to adhere to the fortunes of Mr. Pitt." Fox wavered, it is true (from one of his most fatal faults—facility to the advice of friends whose intellect was far inferior to his own), in the course of the summer, as to the restoration of the grim Lord Chancellor. But some negotiations to that effect failed. His policy with regard to Ireland was on the whole sound and vigorous. He showed temper and judgment in smoothing over a difficulty as to the allowance to be made to the Prince of Wales, which at one time gravely threatened to place the people on the side of the King; and the unanimity that prevailed in a Cabinet so composed must have been owing not more to Lord North's exquisite good humour and epicurean philosophy, than to Fox's frank and cordial temper, and masculine knowledge of the world—of gentlemen. Only in one quarter danger to the Government could be discerned. Ministers were strong for the transaction of ordinary business; they must necessarily be weak the instant they began to legislate on a grander scale, and admit the principles of reconstruction. Parliamentary reform, with Lord North voting one way sincerely, and Mr. Fox another way with little faith in the wisdom of his vote, was out of the question. The safety of the Whigs really lay in the abeyance of Whiggery. But there was one question on which it was impossible not to stir. Reform in England might be shelved—reform in India could brook no longer delay. Not to be evaded was the dire necessity "of doing something" to rectify or terminate a system of misgovernment which,

Lord John Russell justly says, "had alarmed and disquieted English statesmen of all parties." If the Ministry had dallied with this subject, it would have been taken out of their hands by the Opposition. Dundas indeed, whose knowledge of Indian affairs was superior to that of any public man (unless Burke alone be excepted), had already, in the previous April, taken the initiative on the question by the introduction of a "Bill for the better regulation and government of the British possessions in India;" and Mr. Fox had on that occasion declared his intention of taking up the whole question early the next session. Fox had sufficient sagacity to suspect that the measures devised by himself and his Cabinet for the remedy of evils universally acknowledged were of a hazardous nature; but that sagacity did not go far enough to foresee the amount of the hazard, the nature of the objections his bill would provoke, nor the means of preserving its efficiency but removing its more obnoxious provisions. He seems to have supposed that the Opposition would only be formidable, inasmuch as they would be joined "on the grounds of personal attachment to this or that director, or to this or that governor." Never more did he show his want of what the present Emperor of France has called "the electric sympathy between the successful statesman and public opinion," than in his imperfect perception of the real danger to which his measure would expose the Ministry. On the whole he was sanguine of success: "the question," he hoped, "would be over by Christmas, and Government safe for the session." Thus apparently strong, Ministers met Parliament on the 11th of November, 1783. They announced in the King's speech the conclusion of definitive treaties of peace. The situation of the East India Company, and the necessity of providing for the security and improvement of the revenue, were the reasons assigned for calling Parliament together at so early a period. Pitt

spoke on the address with the moderation of a man who saw no opening for assault. He said, it is true, and with justice, "that the principle of the peace proposed was the same as that which the members of the Government, when in opposition, had rejected," and that the vote was the panegyric of the late Ministers upon the very point on which they were then censured; but he agreed that the affairs of India and the state of the revenue demanded the immediate attention of Ministers, in terms so far from hostile, that Fox "thanked him for his support." All thus went on smoothly till, on the 18th, Fox, with a dazzling and fatal eloquence, introduced his "India Bill" and condemned his Government. All which must render the measure adverse alike to Crown and people—all which the elaborate survey of its framers had overlooked—Pitt saw with his usual rapidity of glance, and denounced with a vehemence the result could not fail to justify. The enemy with their own hands had led the fatal horse into Ilion, and Fox but decked with pompous trappings the engine that contained his destruction.

> "Venit summa dies, et ineluctabile tempus
> Dardaniæ: fuimus Tröes, fuit Ilium, et ingens
> Gloria Teucrorum: ferus omnia Jupiter Argos
> Transtulit!"

The noble editor of the Correspondence we have so largely quoted somewhat startles us by the panegyric he devotes to the measure he exhumes from its grave. We are willing to respect the pious reverence with which he handles its cold remains. We will grant they are not the bones of a monster, but we cannot enshrine them as the relics of a saint. Let us allow, if he pleases, that this ill-starred India Bill contained much that was excellent, and that the mischievous part of it was exaggerated by its opponents. But after all that can be said in its defence, it does not the less exhibit a lamentable failure in practical statesmanship. When a reform is necessary, two

considerations should be paramount with a Government seriously anxious to carry it: firstly, the plan proposed should be one which the people will support; and secondly, one that its opponents cannot with effect ascribe to corrupt and sinister motives. Mr. Fox's plan (and to him, not to Burke, Lord John insists on ascribing the honour of its conception) combined every element of unpopularity, and gave every excuse to the charge that it was sought less to govern India well than to secure, by the patronage of India, the duration of the Whig Ministry. "The transfer of a power, the vastness and the abuse of which had been duly impressed on the public mind, to seven commissioners named by the Whig Government, with the disposal of the military commands and commissions in the armies of the Indian empire; the annual nomination of cadets and writers to the different settlements; the purchase of merchandise and stores to the amount of five or six millions a year; the taking up ships and contracts for freights—these, and various other sources of patronage connected with such enormous establishments, such extensive trade, so large a dominion, and so ample a revenue, must have constituted a degree of influence which, when opposed to Ministers, might have impeded the necessary functions of executive government, and when friendly might have enabled them to carry any measures, however injurious to the interests of the people or the prerogative of the Crown."* Thus argued the opponents to the Bill; and poor indeed seems Lord John Russell's answer, that the dictatorship of the commission would only last for four years. For if the patronage thus given to the Coalition could secure a continuance of four years to that government, the same cause would prolong power to the same dispensers of the patronage. And in the very speech in which Fox moved for leave to bring in the Bill, he said that "the influence of the Crown in its most

* Tomline's 'Life of Pitt.'

enormous and alarming state was nothing compared to the boundless patronage of the East Indian government, if the latter was to be used in the influence of that House." But all this patronage was to be placed in the hands of commissioners chosen by Mr. Fox.

As the Bill proceeded, new alarms were created. Its defenders, especially the Attorney-General, used arguments that threatened the charters of every Company in England. Thus vested rights, popular opinions, royal prerogative, were all combined in one opposition, not to reform in India, but to proposals that seemed to transfer to a government at home, whose very existence was an outrage on all creeds of political integrity hitherto received, the corruption of Indian patronage and the audacity of Indian rapine. But though the clouds might be seen collecting from each point in the sky, their distance from each other made the storm slow in forming. Fox saw that his danger lay in discussion, his safety in despatch. He availed himself of his majority to hurry his measure through its successive stages in the Commons, in spite of all that William Grenville and Pitt could do to arrest its progress. On the 9th of December it was carried up to the House of Lords, by Mr. Fox and "a great body of the House of Commons." Meanwhile the King had risen from his inert despondency —the Lord had delivered his ministers into his hands. He had not hitherto openly proclaimed his hostility to his Government; his Government now declared war upon him, and placed him in the position most favourable to monarchical power, and that in which it has ever most excuse for extraordinary measures— the defensive. The commission for the administration of the Indian empire was to be established without concert with the sovereign, and irremoveable except by an address from either House of Parliament. The King might well regard and represent it as a transfer of the royal prerogative from himself to

Mr. Fox. Nor did he stand here without eminent advisers—men not stigmatized as the King's Friends, but who had been the partisans of Rockingham, willing not only to sanction but to recommend his resort to every weapon of defence on which he could lay his grasp. Even while the India Bill was passing through its triumphant progress in Parliament, Lord Temple had taken the initiative in the strategy of resistance. A memorandum dated December 1st (eight days before the Bill passed the Commons), which may be found in the 'Courts and Cabinets of George III.,' vol. i. p. 288, is the key to the whole mystery of those transactions which Fox naturally denounced as a back-door intrigue. This memorandum, in stating the reason that calls for the King's interposition against a plan that "takes more than half the royal power, and by that means disables the King for the rest of his reign," sums up with masterly precision the course to be adopted for the defeat of the measure. The King's refusal, if it passed both Houses, would be a violent means; the change of his ministers immediately after the victorious majority in the House of Commons, little less so. The easier way to remove the Government would be when the Bill received discountenance in its progress; that discountenance could not be anticipated in the Commons, in the Lords it might. But to induce the Lords to take a decided part against the King's Government and in the King's favour, it would be necessary to state explicitly to those disposed towards his Majesty's aid the wishes he entertained. Thus the Bill thrown out of one legislative chamber might leave his Majesty free to decide whether or not he would change the ministry who framed it. The King seized upon the advice thus tendered. Lord Temple took care that there should be no doubt in the Upper Chamber as to the royal mind. And on the 17th of December the India Bill was rejected in the Lords by a majority of nineteen.

On the 18th, at midnight, Lord North and Mr. Fox received the royal message to send their seals of office to his Majesty by the Under Secretary, "as a personal interview would be disagreeable to his Majesty." The course adopted by the King in bringing his direct influence to bear on the House of Lords was one of those extreme measures which extreme dangers can alone justify. Solemn though the ceremonies that surround the constitution, the constitution itself is something more than a ceremony. Its decorum may be shocked by pulling it out of the water, but that is better—once in a way—than allowing it to be drowned with apathetic respect. And the question simply is, whether Fox's India Bill did not threaten the constitution with a worse evil than was inflicted by the nature of the King's interference to prevent it.

"Necessitate quodlibet telum utile est."

But though the King in practice may have adopted a wise policy, in theory it was one that a constitutional statesman would hesitate to advise and be reluctant to defend. And the King thus tampering with a principle so dear to England as liberty of debate, Fox, if he had seen his true position with wise discernment, and maintained it by temperate firmness, might have carried the country with him, and left George III. no option between Whiggery in England or prerogative in Hanover. But here again Fox contrasted his genius as an orator with his marked defects as a Parliamentary chief. On the day the Bill was thrown out by the Lords he wrote word, "We are not yet out, but I suppose we shall be to-morrow; however, we are so strong that nobody can undertake without madness, and, if they do, I think we shall destroy them almost as soon as they are formed." With these convictions on his mind, what was Fox's obvious course? Lord John states it with clearness and candour: first, to have forestalled dismissal, to have resigned at once; secondly, to have

moved resolutions against secret influence; and thirdly, in a collision between the two Houses, to have given the Crown every facility for dissolving Parliament. Instead of this, Fox was still in the King's service, when he supported a resolution—brought forward by one of his party (Mr. Baker) the day the Bill was finally debated by the Lords—in censure of the King himself; that motion carried, one to take into consideration the state of the nation was announced for the following Monday. It was not then as an independent Member of Parliament that Fox defended the letter and spirit of the constitution; it was as Minister of the Crown that he impeached his master. Fox's speech on the question is admirable for its eloquence, but an eloquence such as Mirabeau might have thundered forth at the van of revolution. "The deliberations of this night," said King George's Minister for Foreign Affairs,—

"must decide whether we are to be freemen or slaves! whether the House of Commons be the palladium of liberty or the organ of despotism." "We shall certainly lose our liberty when the deliberations of Parliament are decided, not by legal and usual, but by the illegal and extraordinary, assertions of prerogative." "I did not come in by the fiat of majesty, though by this fiat I am not unwilling to go out. I ever stood, and wish to stand now, on public ground alone."

Language of this kind was certainly misplaced in a man who was still a King's minister, and left triumphant Pitt's assertion that a minister thus complaining that he had not the confidence of his sovereign should have resigned. In the very same night Erskine was put forward to move a resolution of which the direct object was to prevent an appeal to the people, and which declared that the House of Commons would consider as an enemy any person who should presume to advise his Majesty to interrupt the consideration of a suitable remedy for the abuses in the government of India—in other words, to dissolve Parliament; and thus, while condemning the King for an extraordi-

nary assertion of prerogative, his own Government sought to fetter him in the simplest exercise of its recognised powers.

Lord Temple held the seals for three days as Secretary of State; but the part that nobleman had taken utterly disqualified him for a leading share in the Government he had contributed to overthrow. The Treasury was a third time pressed upon Pitt, and this time he accepted; but it was not without a full perception of the difficulties that beset him.

"When I went," says Bishop Tomline, "into Mr. Pitt's bedroom the next morning, he told me he had had not a moment's sleep; he expressed great uneasiness at the state of public affairs, at the same time declaring his fixed resolution not to abandon the situation he had undertaken, but to make the best stand in his power, though very doubtful of the result."

Many public men, indeed, who had approved his opposition to the late ministry, declined the responsibility of assisting in the formation of a new one. No one believed his government could last a month. In the ministry he formed he was compelled entirely to rely upon the Peers; not one commoner of sufficient mark for the Cabinet could he find. And yet so strongly was it felt that the struggle waged by the minister was against the Great Houses, that a peer of high rank said shortly afterwards, "Mr. Pitt single-handed has beat the aristocracy." It was not the aristocracy he beat, but rather by the help of the aristocracy he beat the oligarchy which had ruled in its name.

A name greater than Temple's was absent from the new Government. But its greatness necessitated its exclusion, except at the head of the list. The Earl of Shelburne, according to Lord Holland, "felt great resentment against Mr. Pitt for leaving him out in the formation of his ministry." Lord Holland (never in the Earl's confidence) errs in this conclusion. Pitt would have justified every charge of presumption brought against him had he invited to a post inferior

to his own the brilliant and haughty chief under whom he had served but the year before.*

On better authority than Lord Holland's† we presume to contradict a prevalent idea that Shelburne bore a grudge against Pitt for not urging a request that a man of the Earl's temper would have treated as an affront. But not less is it certain, that, if Shelburne felt no resentment against Mr. Pitt, deep was his resentment against George III. The anger was mutual. The King never pardoned Lord Shelburne's resignation—Shelburne never pardoned the King for misapprehending his situation then, and not appealing to his counsels afterwards; and, from circumstances insufficiently known to us, the Earl always considered that the King had not only wronged but deceived him. Henceforth this remarkable man appears no more as a candidate for power. He accepted, not without reluctance, the Marquisate of Lansdowne, as Temple, equally haughty, accepted the Marquisate of Buckingham; but he was peculiarly careful that the world should not suppose that his political independence was compromised by the honours that attested his former services. The year after the assumption of his new title he suddenly reappeared in the Lords, and, with that eccentricity of self-willed

* Indeed, from motives of obvious delicacy, so carefully did Pitt refrain from soliciting to the aid of an experiment, the hazard of which was ascribed to his personal arrogance and vanity, men of station more established than his own, that not even the decided part which Lord Gower had taken against the India Bill induced him to press that nobleman to give to the Cabinet the advantage of his name; and it was Lord Gower who sent to inform the young minister that "in the distressed situation of the sovereign and the country he would take any office in which he could be useful." Lord Gower gave a noble example in the patriotism which distinguished him on this occasion. Twice previously refusing the Treasury, and sincerely preferring the repose of private life—he not only risked the prestige of his position in accepting office under a Government that seemed doomed at its birth, but afterwards gave up the office most suited to his personal dignity, the Presidentship of the Council, and condescended to accept the Privy Seal, in order to secure to the Cabinet the illustrious Camden, who, having been Lord Chancellor, could not well take any office but that of Lord President.

† Viz. Lord Lansdowne's (Lord Shelburne's son).

genius which had obtained for him the epithet of insincere, he relieved the vote that he gave to the Government from all suspicion of servile complaisance by a speech barbed with an irony that delighted the Opposition. But such demonstrations of his earlier spirit were, for some years, too rare to prove to the public that Lord Shelburne still lived in the Marquis of Lansdowne. On the Regency question, indeed, he displayed in a speech which, in masculine diction and vigorous thought, is perhaps the most striking specimen of his eloquence preserved to the study of English orators, his rooted disdain of Whig tactics and idols, and the philosophy of the Tribune which he had grafted on his experience of Courts.

"The people," exclaimed the great Marquis in the course of this nervous oration—"the people, my lords, have rights and privileges; kings and princes have none." The French Revolution, with the war which was its collateral consequence, furnished the Lord of Bowood with ample occasion to deduce from that startling axiom many notable problems in the Mathesis of Democracy. Retaining to the last his profound contempt for Fox, the shafts that he launched against Pitt were forged on the same anvil as those which had thinned the ranks of the oligarchy he had aided Pitt to destroy. The high-spirited soldier who had so reluctantly acceded to the claims of American patriots, so scrupulously enforced the formality of a clause to save the honour of the Imperial Crown, now insisted on suing for peace to a nation which had decreed that a proposal for peace was a capital crime in its citizens, and declared by the mouth of its minister, "If kings treat with us, let them treat with our armies on the frontiers." *

Yet it is not thus that we would part with this eminent man. We love rather to regard him saun-

* See Lord Grenville's reply to Lord Lansdowne's motion for peace with France. Parl. Debates, Feb. 17, 1794.

tering on the lawns of Bowood, listening with the sceptical smile of his profound and embittered experience to the young visions of Bentham; or, in the salons of Paris, startling Mirabeau with his easy force, and comparing with the ill-starred Malesherbes the stores of a reading almost equally diffuse, and the results of a far more extensive commerce with mankind. Nor is there less interest in the contemplation of this once fiery soldier, this passionate yet scheming statesman, musing alone amidst the vast collection of political documents which his industry amassed, as if in those records of abortive stratagem and foiled ambition he found a melancholy consolation for the close of his own career. We must apologise for the length of this episodical digression—not indeed disproportioned to the dignity of the man to whom, more than any other, is to be ascribed that great revolution in our national councils which freed the monarchy from the dominion of the Great Houses, to whom Pitt owed his introduction into the national councils, and from whom, of all contemporaneous statesman, that Minister acknowledged that he had learned the most. Upon large classes of our countrymen the influence of Lord Shelburne's peculiar intellect and modes of thinking still rests. It may be seen in the principles of commerce now generally received, and to which he was the first practical statesman who lent his authority; it may be seen in that powerful division in the popular camp which disdains alike the rant of the hustings and the affectation with which the Whigs invoke history and the constitution to the aid of party manœuvres—the philosophers of the English Agora, with whom the principles of Mr. Fox are less authority than the maxims of Mr. Mill. While, apart from his later doctrines, and viewing him rather as he stood midway between Rockingham and North, his tenets often live again in that large and growing school of politicians who

have no fear of the people in defending their institutions, and who will not allow that genuine Conservatism should concede to any faction arrogating popular claims a monopoly of the privilege to reform abuses, and to keep from that discord which is the sure prelude to social disorder the reciprocal harmonies of opinion and law.

On forming the Coalition Government, Fox had said "success only could justify it." Success only could justify the course the King took to overthrow it. But no sooner was that Government dismissed than the people, before comparatively supine from a belief in its necessity, hastened to manifest the detestation they had suppressed. Addresses of congratulation to the King poured in from all quarters. The constituencies were evidently not with the majority in the Commons. There, the motion for a new writ for the borough of Appleby was received with loud and derisive laughter.

The War of the Giants now commenced. Never in Parliament was a contest to decide the fate of parties for long years to come fought with such fiery valour on the one side, with such consummate judgment on the other. By a fatal error of policy Fox contrived to fix the contest upon ground untenable in itself and unpopular by the arguments used to defend it, viz. that Parliament should not be dissolved. The insistence on this point could only be construed into an acknowledgment of weakness, a fear of the very tribunal whose decision, according to all his previous theories, it became him to be the first to solicit. In Pitt's absence from Parliament during his re-election, the Opposition carried an address to the Crown praying his Majesty not to dissolve. His Majesty drily replied, that he should not interrupt their meeting by that exercise of his prerogative.

Pitt, indeed, was urged by many of his friends to advise a dissolution; but he foresaw that such a step

would be premature. What were called the great parliamentary interests—the close boroughs—were against him. His chance of success lay with the popular and independent constituencies. To command these, prolonged discussion was essential. He could not leave unanswered in the mouths of his opponents on the hustings the cry that he came in "by secret influences;" or that, in opposing the India Bill, he would maintain Indian misgovernment. He resolved to confront the tempestuous majority against him, and let the people compare himself with his assailants before he asked for their verdict. The House adjourned from the 26th of December to the 12th of January. During the recess Pitt was fortunately enabled to give a signal proof of that superiority to self-interest which the English people are ever disposed to associate with a paramount zeal for the public service. The Clerkship of the Pells, in his own gift, became vacant; its emoluments were above 3000*l.* a year. Lord Thurlow and many others pressed him to take that office to himself. He was poor, his present station exceedingly precarious. Pecuniary independence was confessedly dear to the man who, in order to secure it, had even thought of resigning the position he had so rapidly won in Parliament for the tedious profession of the bar. Pitt not only declined himself to take the office, but, in the appointment he made, he covered a blot in the Rockingham Administration. Colonel Barré had been rewarded by that Government with a pension of 3000*l.* a year. No member of Parliament more deserved some distinction from a Government espousing popular opinions, but the public did not like to see that distinction in the jobbing form of a pension. Pitt gave the Clerkship of the Pells to Colonel Barré on condition that the pension was resigned. "It is the act of a man," said that stern colonel, whose first growl in Parliament had daunted

Chatham, though Chatham had lived to tame him, "who feels that he stands upon a high eminence in the eyes of that country which he is destined to govern."

Pitt hastened to meet the attacks made on him in his absence. But one flaw could be found in his title —he was said to have come in through intrigue; through secret influence: that accusation Lord John Russell has repeated. "Mr. Pitt," he says, "committed a great fault in accepting office as the price of an unworthy intrigue." This allegation is wholly inaccurate. Grant that the communications between the King and Lord Temple, and the circulation of the King's views as to the India Bill among the Peers, could be fairly called an unworthy intrigue— there is not the slightest evidence that Pitt advised or shared in them: the utmost even that Lord Holland can say on that head is, that they were "*probably* known to Pitt." The probability is all the other way. Pitt, we are told by one who was thoroughly in his confidence at that particular period (his former tutor, Bishop Tomline), though seriously embarrassed at the loss of Lord Temple's assistance in forming his Government, was "convinced of the propriety of Temple's resignation, under the present impression of the public mind." Temple himself stood aloof from that Government, gave it no advice, and evidently—by a letter to Pitt, dated a week after his own resignation of the seals, beginning "Dear Sir"—was exceedingly chilled towards his near relation.* Had Pitt in any way authorised the clandestine transactions between Temple and the King, he could not have been convinced of the propriety of Lord Temple's abstinence from the Government; and for the same reason he would have felt himself disqualified for office. His participation in such intrigue must have been known to its promoters, and he could

* 'Courts and Cabinets of George III.,' vol. i. p. 291.

not have stood up in parliament and pronounced these solemn and stately words on the first day he met that parliament as minister of the Crown :—

"I came up no backstairs; when sent for by my sovereign to know whether I would accept office, I necessarily went to the Royal Closet. Little did I think to be ever charged in this House with being the tool and abettor of secret influence. I will never condescend to be the instrument of any secret advisers whatever; nor in one instance, while I have the honour to act as minister of the Crown, will I be responsible for measures not my own, or at least in which my heart and judgment do not entirely acquiesce. I have taken upon me the government of the country upon one single, plain, intelligible principle, by which I desire to stand or fall, viz., to save the country from the India Bill, which threatened destruction to its liberties. My conduct is uniform and intelligible, and the nation and the world will understand and applaud it."

The nation did understand it then, and understands it now. By one of those quick decisions in the public judgment which make distinctions the most marked on questions the most delicate, the people discriminated between Lord Temple and Pitt. They would not have accepted the first as minister. In accrediting the last they acquitted him. Pitt was not the questionable cause that destroyed the Coalition, but his Government was the necessary consequence of that destruction. And he would have deserted the principles he professed, condemned the country to a bill that he regarded fatal to its liberties, and delivered people and King bound hand and foot to the Coalition Ministry, if he had said, "I cannot aid in defending the right, because somebody else has given me the power to do so by having done something wrong." And truly observes his biographer, "that such was the confidence felt in Mr. Pitt, even at this early period of his life, that his character was not in the slightest degree affected by the clamour which compelled Lord Temple to resign." Two days after, the young minister brought forward his own India Bill, and gave the country an occasion to contrast his constructive genius with that of Mr. Fox.

The Bill was rejected by the House after a second reading on the motion for committal. But in that hostile assembly the majority against it was only eight; and the sense of the country was soon pronounced in its favour. Still Fox continued to fight against a dissolution, and upon arguments equally hostile to constitutional monarchy and representative government. He had the incredible audacity to assert that the Crown did not possess the power of dissolving parliament in the middle of a session, "an attempt," says Lord John truly, "that had neither law nor precedent in its favour."

To give the supreme power of the nation, not to the people who elected the House of Commons, but to a House of Commons actually sitting—and without appeal to the people, whatever the measures it might adopt—would obviously be to constitute a standing army against both the Crown and the Constituencies. And never was there an instance in which a demand of this nature could be more unhappily made; for the majority against the King's Government were composed, as Lord John remarks, "in part of the men who had led the country to loss and disgrace during the American war, and in part of the men who had promised to bring them to punishment for that misconduct. It would be said," adds Lord John (and it *was* said), "that the object for which these two hostile parties had combined was to erect a power, neither elected by the people nor removable by the Crown, in whose store all the treasures of India were to be thrown for the purpose of maintaining the sway of an oligarchy unknown to the Constitution and hateful to the nation. Such were the perils rashly incurred by Mr. Fox; such were the perils by which he was overwhelmed." But granting that, both as a party leader and a constitutional statesman, Mr. Fox thus proved his grievous defects, cheerfully do we add with Lord John, "that it is impossible not to admire the wonderful resource,

the untiring energy, the various eloquence, the manly courage, with which he conducted this extraordinary campaign." In fact, he appears to us never more signally to have shown how possible it is in the English parliament to unite the grandest powers of debate with the most egregious mistakes in Council. But the Constitution meanwhile was shaking beneath this contest of its elementary powers; the country gentlemen on both sides feared for the land in which their stake was so large. Amongst them party was suspended—patriotism prevailed; supporters of Government and friends of the Opposition united in the open endeavour to reconcile Pitt and Fox, King and Commons. Against such a combination all Pitt's more ambitious interests must have been arrayed, yet apparently he did not suffer such considerations to weigh with him unduly. He felt the tremendous difficulties of his position. He stood the sole Cabinet Minister in the House of Commons (charged, therefore, with the defence and conduct of all the departments in the state), against a combination unparalleled for the splendour of the powers which it brought to bear upon debate. On many prospective questions Pitt, still professedly a Reformer, might concur with Fox, provided Fox were his colleague; against Fox it might be impossible to carry even measures that Fox in his conscience might approve; he assented therefore to the well-meant entreaties of the mediators to give to the Crown a strong Government, so far as to state that he was ready to meet the Duke of Portland to consider the formation of a new Ministry on equal terms. Again the pride of the oligarchy destroyed the best hopes of the party they led. Mr. Pitt must descend from his office! the Duke of Portland must receive a direct message from the King. "For what purpose," then, said Pitt with justice,—

"should the present Ministry give way? The answer is obvious: to make room for the introduction of a set of persons who were

lately dismissed for conduct which lost them the confidence of their sovereign as well as that of the people. In adverting to a wish very generally and very warmly expressed, of forming an union which might give stability to Government and reconcile all parties—to such a measure I am by no means an enemy, provided it could be established on such a broad and liberal basis as would meet the wishes of that respectable and independent body of men by whose support and countenance I have been invariably honoured. But in accomplishing this object all personal prejudices and private views must be laid aside, and a stable Government and a solid union be alone sought for."

"But," said he on another occasion,—

"the only fortress I desire to defend is the fortress of the Constitution; for that I will resist every attack, every attempt to seduce me out of it. With regard to personal honour or public principle, can it be expected that I should consent to march out with a halter round my neck, and meanly beg to be readmitted and considered as a volunteer in the army of the enemy?"

The Opposition proceeded, *pari passu*, with hostile divisions and abortive negotiations. At each attack it grew fiercer in language, weaker in result; majorities dwindled rapidly down as the constituencies began to operate more and more upon their Members, until at length, on moving another address to the Crown to remove Ministers, that mighty phalanx, which three weeks ago seemed to Fox sufficient to crush every Government but his own, gained its point by a majority of one. From that moment the battle was virtually over; Fox did not dare to divide again, the Mutiny Bill was passed, the supplies voted to the extent demanded, and sixteen days afterwards the King prorogued Parliament, declaring it to be a duty he owed to the Constitution and the country to recur as speedily as possible to the sense of his people. The result was the triumphant acquittal of the King, the paramount power of his Minister. The counties and commercial towns rose everywhere against the Great Houses. For the first time during his reign the King was popular; and that popularity he never afterwards lost. In concert with Lord Temple he had endangered his crown; in

concert with Pitt he confirmed it on his head. The strongholds of Democracy revolted from the Whigs. Mr. Coke was ejected from Norfolk, Erskine from Portsmouth, General Conway from Bury; even Lord John Cavendish, though universally pitied, was ignominiously defeated; and, to crown all, against the heir of Sir George Saville—that highest prototype of the Whig country gentleman,—against the Great Houses of Fitzwilliam and Howard, Wilberforce carried the county of York. Not less than 160 Members who had supported the Coalition lost their seats, and were honoured by the witty appellation of "Fox's Martyrs." Thus by a rapid succession of errors in judgment Fox destroyed the ascendency of that famous party which he found so powerful and made so feeble; and thus, in three years after his entrance into Parliament, Pitt, seeking only in public opinion the elements of party, confirmed in the appointment of the Crown by the support of the people, commenced his long career as Minister of England.

On looking back to the causes of a rise so unparalleled, the eye rests first on the man whose genius resisted and whose errors conduced to it. Every blunder in Fox was a stepping-stone to Pitt. But great is the general who knows how to profit by the mistakes of his adversary. That in the rapidity with which his reputation spread, and in the contented acquiescence of the rank and file to his sudden promotion over the heads of veterans, Pitt was greatly indebted to the accident of his birth, must be frankly conceded. To be the son of a great man is to be born in the purple. But his birth only recommends him to election; it does not qualify him for inheritance. He is measured by his father's standard before he is full-grown, and must be acknowledged as a giant in order to be received as a prince. His station has a kind of poetry, and his merits are submitted to the test imposed upon poets, which mediocrity cannot

pass. Nay, more rare than even the fame of a great poet is the fame of a great man's son. In achieving his father's position, circumstance favoured Pitt more than it had aided Chatham. No Newcastle interfered between himself and the Treasury. He had no enemy in his king; he had as yet no infirmities of body to sour his temper and irritate his passions. But it must also be owned that, when circumstance was in his favour, he seized it with more facility; or, when adverse, turned it aside with calmer judgment, or mastered it with more consistent firmness, than characterised the fitful energy of his father's less regulated genius. It had been the boast of Chatham to rule in defiance of all parties, though his school in reality was a bold eclecticism of conflicting doctrines. And among the prominent causes of his son's ascendency in public opinion was, as we have before indicated, the care with which he maintained his position detached from the errors of every faction, familiarising the people to the autocracy of a single intellect. The character of his intellect contributed even more than its degree to the rapid and facile acquisition of power. It had something of the serenity which gave to Pericles the title of Olympian.

> "Tranquillum vultus et majestate serenâ
> Mulcentem radios."

And though his spirit was high and his rebuke could be crushing, yet it is remarkable that he never spoke of any man so as to make a conjunction with that man personally discreditable to either, if sanctioned by political principle.

Another characteristic of Pitt, growing out of the self-reliance which at the commencement of his career kept him aloof from party, was the firmness with which he adhered to his own judgment against the advice, however friendly and plausible, of inferior men. He could not be persuaded to accept the office of Prime Minister before the Coalition was tried, nor

to dissolve parliament prematurely when the Coalition was overthrown—in this respect strongly contrasting Fox, for whose mistakes we are constantly told by his eulogists that the advice of friends was chiefly to blame. Nor amidst the leading attributes of Pitt's mind should we omit the quality of patience. He could always master his passions and wait his time. Neither pique, nor spleen, nor interest, nor ambition, could disturb this enduring fortitude of temper. Slighted by Lord Rockingham, he did not vent any resentment on the Rockingham Whigs. Spite was a thing unknown to him. Courted by the Opposition against the Rockingham Government, he remained neutral; and, though denouncing the Coalition Ministry and withholding from it all confidence, he refrained from every appearance of factious opposition against the persons who governed, reserving to himself solely the right to scrutinise their measures, and even supporting them (as on the Receipt Tax) where to oppose would have purchased popularity at the price of his convictions. Thus, by a natural seizure of the rapid succession of events afforded to him, he established character as well as fame; and, his public integrity and high moral bearing in parliament once acknowledged, no doubt his private virtues and even his less social attributes assisted to consolidate his political repute. It did much to counteract the attempts to adduce in his youth a disqualification for his eminence, that the usual follies of youth could not be urged against him; while his purity from every excess and his disdain of fashionable pleasure, brought into greater light the private foibles and errors of Mr. Fox. If the two men were to be compared in point of age, Fox seemed the wild boy, Pitt the matured man. Yet we think too much stress has been laid on the private errors of Mr. Fox in their influence on his political fortunes; for those errors were most conspicuous at the time when his authority was most acknowledged in parliament, and his public

character most in favour out of doors. They were not successfully charged against him till his political indiscretions made even many of his former apologists refer the reckless ambition of the statesman to the habits of a gambler and the despair of a bankrupt. Even had his manners been as rigid as Pitt's, those public indiscretions would have equally affected his hold on the general confidence and esteem. Nor should it be forgotten that if, as leader of a party, his personal faults were political defects, so in the same capacity his personal virtues were not less conspicuous as political merits. Benignity and sweetness in social intercourse, cordial frankness, undaunted courage, the attractive warmth of a heart too genial for malice and too large for envy, were qualities that might well, in the eyes of his followers, redeem the riotous overflow of a rich vitality, and were inestimable advantages in the consolidation of party and the government of men. But Pitt's gain in his exemption from the follies of youth was not more to the benefit of his moral repute than to the concentration of his intellectual faculties. "A great passion," says Lavater, "bears no partner." Pitt's great passion, no doubt, was the love of power, but it was made pure by its very intensity—a love that chastened itself by exalting the character of its object. To govern England, but to govern nobly, was the one end to which he devoted all the vigour of surpassing faculties, with that singleness of purpose which gives even to mediocrity successes that fail to genius, when genius renounces its own superiority of force by relaxing its discipline and scattering its troops.

In estimating Pitt's eloquence, what most should be admired is its adaptation to his object; it was preeminent over that of all his contemporaries in the attribute of dignity; it was inferior to Fox's in playfulness, variety, in literary ornament and grace, in compact and nervous reasoning, and, above all, in vehemence and passion; it is immeasurably more

suited to the man who speaks as the ruler of a nation and the councillor of a King; "he speaks," said Lord North, "like a born Minister:" and perhaps Pitt gained as much towards the acquisition of the objects to which his eloquence was devoted by his abstinence from certain varieties of beauty as by his abounding magnificence in others.

We incline to believe that it was not from penury but from prudence that he so sparingly embroidered the senatorial majesty that pervades his style. A scholar so accomplished, with a memory so prodigious and a readiness so quick, could certainly have given to his orations the classical ornaments in which Lord Holland proclaims them deficient; and so great a master of sarcasm, possessed of a vivacity in his familiar circles which made no mean judge of the attribute term him "the wittiest man of his age," could surely have seasoned his discourse with jest and whim, if he had not thought that the spangles would ill accord with the purple hem of his toga. Perhaps for the same reason there is in his speeches so little of metaphysical subtlety or abstruse speculation. To be plain with dignity—to be practical, yet broad—is the eloquence most adapted to gain its ends with the audience addressed by Pitt. There are some beauties in literature which are the worst defects in oratory; and there is not a trace in Demosthenes of what in our closets we most admire in Burke. What has been said upon this score by a very liberal and very accomplished critic—no inconsiderable debater himself in the House of Commons—is equally wise and true.*

"The eloquence of Mr. Pitt had not the fault which is sometimes imputed to it of a deficiency in large and philosophical speculation. In this sort of excursion, though it dealt sparingly, it could with no propriety be called deficient, for it dealt enough.

"The objectors appear to forget that oratorical, like poetic

* 'Quarterly Review,' No. 7. August 1810. Review of Giffard's 'Life of Pitt.'—The article was written by Mr. Robert Grant.

composition, is in its nature not philosophical but popular. The object of both is to affect strongly; and no critical precept can be more universally familiar, nor more deeply founded in human nature, than this,—that the mind is strongly affected only by near and individual representations. The abstract theorems and generic conclusions of the metaphysician are destructive of that warm interest, that feeling of intimate concern, that sense, as it were, of home, which it should be the business of the orator to excite. In what precise degree philosophical discussion may enter into a popular oration, there can be no occasion to consider, so long as we recollect that, being in its very nature extraneous, it can hardly appear too little; nor is it, therefore, intended to question the doctrine that an orator must build his reasonings on a solid basis of general principles. He must undoubtedly so build if he would not have his edifice overthrown by the first blast; but it is not the least important that this basis should be concealed from sight. The structure of his composition must be reared on the most massive foundations, while in semblance it is self-poised and pensile. His oratory throughout must be governed by an enlarged philosophy, but a philosophy which, though hidden from sense, is yet (we make the allusion with reverence) distinctly visible in its effects."

But it is only on rare occasions that the true orator of the House of Commons has to nerve himself for the heights of the art. His reputation is more habitually fixed according to the strength and facility with which he moves upon level ground; and it is here more especially that Pitt excelled all his rivals. In the formal introduction of a question, in the perspicuity of explanation in detail, in short and apt rejoinder in business-like debate, no man was so delightful to listen to: the decorum of his bearing, the fluency of his diction, the exquisite lucidity of his utterance, must have been a relief to Fox's preliminary stutter, shrill key-note, lifted fist, and redundant action—to Burke's Irish brogue and episodical discursions.

But above all, whether in rare orations or in every-day debate, Pitt possessed that one incomparable quality of uniform earnestness, which brings the character of the man to bear upon the effects of the speaker:

"Sermo imago animi—qualis vir, talis et oratio."

Thus, as one who enjoyed the privileges of a witness and a listener expresses it:—

"The distinguishing excellence of his speaking corresponded to the distinguishing excellence of his whole mental system; every part of his speaking, in sentiment, in language, and in delivery, evidently bore in our judgment the stamp of his character—all communicated to us a definite yet vivid appearance of the qualities of strenuousness without effort, unlaboured intrepidity, and serene greatness." *

Hence not only in the degree, but in the style and character of his eloquence, not only in the culture and power of his intellect, but in its harmony to the uses on which it was concentred — not only in the accident of circumstances favourable to his fortunes, but in the judgment that scanned, the prudence that weighed, the readiness which seized, and the moral dignity which ennobled the occasions proffered to ambition, we may find the main causes which secured to Pitt his early supremacy of power. But a cause more operative than all was in his remarkable sympathy with the public opinion of his time. He and the people seemed thoroughly to understand each other. Nor must it be forgotten, that Pitt stood before the electors who returned the majority that secured his power, in the character of a practical Reformer. He might have been the choice of the King, but he could never have won the enthusiasm of the people if he had left to Mr. Fox the monopoly of popular opinions. To have rejected the India Bill would not have been enough, if he had not replaced it by an India Bill of his own. To have defended the prerogative of the Crown would have little bested him, if he had not made yet more conspicuous his zeal for the purity of the House of Commons, and his care for the liberties of the people. The position thus won was, however, beset with difficulties, the variety and magnitude of which

* 'Quarterly Review,' No. 7. August 1810. Review of Giffard's 'Life of Pitt.'

startle the retrospection. The new election still left him alone on the Treasury bench, to encounter the same mighty leaders of debate against whose united eloquence it seemed but a few months before to many of his wisest friends—seemed almost to his own resolute mind—impossible to carry on the business of the Government. All hope of converting such foes into allies was gone. He was pledged to various reforms, with Lord Thurlow for his colleague and George III. for his sovereign. To retain the countenance of the King, to preserve union in the Cabinet, yet to convince the people of his good faith and integrity, was a task in which a vigilant Opposition might well hope to expose his failure, and strand him upon either shoal—royal desertion or popular reprobation. His majority in the House of Commons, however large, was composed of sections that seemed little likely long to amalgamate—here, the opponents to every change, who saw in Pitt but the destroyer of the Whigs; and there, the ardent enthusiasts, who hailed him as the representative of progress.

If the personal difficulties of the minister were thus great, little had occurred to improve the prospects of the country since the date at which, in an earlier part of this sketch, we reviewed its calamitous and menacing condition. True that peace was now concluded; but that peace, not less galling to her pride because essential to the very springs of her existence, found England utterly drained of blood and treasure. Her utmost resources were believed to be inadequate to meet the debt she had incurred. Her income, unable to support even a peace establishment, was three millions less than her expenditure, including the interest of an enormous unfunded debt. Credit was still shaken to its centre by the startling fall of the funds under the preceding government: the three per cents. were between 56 and 57. The chances of a national bankruptcy furnished a theme to solemn pamphlets and despondent talk. Our

military power appeared literally annihilated. At the close of the war 3000 men were the utmost force that could have been safely sent forth on any offensive duty; and even Pitt had been compelled, in defending the treaties of peace, to show that our naval supremacy had melted into a "visionary fabric." In the eyes of foreign nations the name of England was more abased than when the Dutch admiral had swept the Thames with his besom. For her weakness was now considered not the consequence of a malady, not the effect of a blow, but the fatal symptom of incurable decay. "No man," said Mirabeau, in one of his early writings, "would believe me when I prophesied that England would yet recover—that there was enough sap in her boughs to repair the loss of their leaves." At home the discontent which disasters abroad invariably produce was aggravated by the prospects of additional burthens, and fraught with danger to monarchy itself, by the contagion of those principles which, identifying freedom with absolute democracy, in America had established, and in France were preparing, a republic. The state of Ireland alone, in spite of concessions, which, indeed, by separating her more from the sister kingdom, rather tended to restore her to anarchy than reconcile her factions to social order, was sufficiently critical to demand the most temperate forethought, and strain the most vigorous intellect. An army of volunteers numbering not less than 40,000, and according to some authorities exceeding 70,000 men, had for four years occupied the island, defied its parliament, startled the streets of its metropolis with files of soldiers (opening a path to the congregation of political reformers), and dictated to either kingdom "as a national convention of military delegates," acting under no legal control; holding no communication with the executive, and equally formidable as subjects justly aggrieved and insurgents treasonably armed.

A future occasion may be found to pursue the marvellous career which commenced under difficulties so complicated—dangers so alarming. That in the scope of the survey, errors in policy, fallacies in opinion will appear, no rational admirer of Mr. Pitt will dispute; but the more minute the criticism, the more salient will become the countervailing merits of rectitude and wisdom; the more partial inconsistencies will vanish in the symmetry of uniform principles regulating definite and majestic action—the more the graver charges which the carelessness of the public has permitted to the injustice of party will receive the contradiction of facts, and Despotism and Intolerance lose all pretext to the sanction of that logical intellect and liberal heart. Yet to others less restricted in space and more competent to the task than ourselves, we would fain commend the ample and searching inquiry how a Sovereign whom Temple pronounced to be ungrateful, and Shelburne insincere, —who possessed even more than a Tudor the always kingly, often perilous, faculty of *Will*—who had induced North for three years to belie his deepest convictions—who had compelled Yorke in spite of honour the most sensitively fastidious to violate his promise to Lord Rockingham, accept the Great Seal, and hurry home to die, whether of noble grief or by his own despairing hand *—with whom every minister

* "My brother," says Lord Hardwicke, in his journal, "went into the levee, was called into the closet, and in a manner *compelled* by the King. At his return from Court, about three o'clock, he broke in upon me, who was talking with Lord Rockingham, and gave us the account. We were both astounded, to *use an obsolete but strong word*, at so sudden an event; and I was particularly shocked at his being so overborne, in a manner I had never heard of, nor could imagine possible between subject and prince." Lord Hardwicke adds, in a letter to Lord Rockingham, "My poor brother's entanglement was such as history can scarce parallel." On the 17th Yorke had accepted the Great Seal; on the 20th he was a corpse. "A mystery," says Lord Albemarle ('Rockingham's Memoirs,' vol. ii. p. 164), "still hangs over the immediate cause of his decease; it was known that his death was attended by a copious effusion of blood. This was attributed to bursting a blood-vessel, and to having been bled four times. Walpole says that every one believed he had fallen by his own hand,—whether on his sword or by a razor was uncertain."

hitherto brought in contact, had wrecked either public character or political ambition; how a Sovereign made so dangerous to his councillors, not less by his virtues than his faults, was conciliated without loss of personal integrity or popular favour; how the people expecting so much, and necessarily in some hopes disappointed, yet continued to rally heart and hand round the lofty, tranquil, solitary minister; how from the attitude of a despairing suppliant to which Fox had humbled her at the footstools of Frederic and Joseph, dismissed here with a shrug of the shoulders, there with a sneer of disdain, England, exalted by those mighty hands, rose high above the Royalties that had looked down upon her sorrow; her exhausted resources multiplied a thousand-fold, her imposts but increasing her wealth by stimulating her recruited energies; her malcontents united to her laws; her empire consolidated in Ireland, as in India, from its centre to its verge; and realizing, in the tribute to her marts and the reverence yielded to her flag, the aspirations of Chatham and even the designs of Cromwell; how, amidst the storm which swept from France the institutions of man and the monuments of God, her altars became more reverenced and the orb more assured to her sceptre; and how, when reluctantly COMPELLED into war which suspended the reforms but not the prosperity of peace, that Nation, when Pitt came to its succour, without the power to recruit the remnants of a beaten army, and contemplating bankruptcy as a relief from its burthens, coped, and not vainly, with him who united the hosts of Charlemagne to the genius of Alexander, saved, for ends nobler far than conceived by their owners, the thrones it retained as the landmarks of Europe, and, animated by the soul breathed into its ranks even when that soul was on earth no more, ensured the crowning victory by which the hand of Wellington accomplished the thought of Pitt.

# PYM *versus* FALKLAND.

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# PYM *versus* FALKLAND.

[1. *The Debates on the Grand Remonstrance, November and December, 1641.* By JOHN FORSTER.
2. *Arrest of the Five Members by Charles I.; a Chapter on English History Re-written.* By JOHN FORSTER.]

THE characteristics of Mr. Forster's mind are, in many respects, eminently fitted to the subjects he selects for historical disquisition. He finds his heroes in men who were thoroughly in earnest, and earnestness is the distinguishing attribute of his own vigorous understanding. To much patience of research he unites a remarkable power of generalization, and he groups his details so as to render clear and prominent the facts he desires to enforce. His style itself is in accordance with his theme—solid and impressive; animated, where occasion permits, with a severe and manly eloquence. As his nature is hearty and his convictions deep, so his preferences cannot fail to be decided. But if such preferences sometimes warp his judgment, a similar charge must, more or less, apply to every historical commentator on the period from which, as it is truly said, "the factions of modern times trace their divergence."

And those men, to whom the preferences of Mr. Forster are thus boldly given and openly avowed, are never to be spoken of without respect, nor judged without a certain degree of indulgence, by critics whose opinions are disciplined by the study of our history, and whose sentiments are warmed by

an appreciation of our freedom. To those men, illustrated afresh by the learning and the eloquence of the writer whose works are now before us, we owe lasting obligations; but not the least obligations are the warnings which their errors have bequeathed.

With a masterly hand Mr. Forster has shaped forth the large image of Pym, and has placed it on the height which its proportions demand. Pym was, in fact, not only the most popular man at that time in England, but, perhaps, as a practical politician, the ablest and most effective. What Mr. Disraeli said of the late Sir R. Peel may more accurately be said of Pym—"he was the greatest Member of Parliament that ever lived." He thoroughly understood his audience and his theatre. No business was too large, none too small for him. Historians before Mr. Forster have failed to make clear to the reader the prodigious power of this man's nature. Mr. Forster is the first who shows him as his age knew; let us add that Mr. Forster too fondly judges him as his followers judged. Pym, more than Hampden, and far more than Vane, represents the House of Commons in its quarrel with Charles from the date of the Grand Remonstrance to the day when Pym himself was buried at Westminster amongst the monuments of kings, feebler and less despotic than himself. He was a chief who united most of the qualities that serve and adorn the leader of party: pre-eminent experience in public affairs, unrelaxing vigilance in the attention bestowed on them, profound mastery in those ready tactics by which occasions to weaken or wound an adversary are fearlessly seized and unscrupulously improved. Even his personal appearance favoured the part he played. Nature gave him the burly frame that impresses the eye with a sense of power, and the broad front that seems to defy enmity and invite confidence. His eloquence was more elaborate than Clarendon's description would lead a reader unacquainted with his speeches to infer. Ready in debate and

ingenious in reply, there is yet the evidence of much careful preparation in his more important harangues; the arguments are arranged with the deliberate logic of written composition, and enforced or embellished with no common rhetorical skill. Tinged, but not imbued, with the religious colourings of the day, his style is chastened to a more neutral tint than that which offends a cultivated taste in most of the Puritan leaders. It is impossible not to recognise in his discourses, as in his actions, a consummate man of the world: he had lived more in general society, and familiarized his reasonings more with the ideas of a metropolis, than most of his associates. He was free from the formal affectations of the Puritans in his manners as in his dress. He was proverbially gallant to women; and tempers so disposed are generally hearty and genial in their intercourse with men. He was careless in money matters; and it is perhaps to his honour that he died in embarrassed circumstances. The House of Commons voted 10,000*l.* to the payment of his debts—a large sum, considering the value of money at that time. Rigid probity in pecuniary matters was not the special attribute of the Parliamentarian party, after the events of the Civil War permitted them to tamper with the resources exclusively at their control. Making allowance for partial untruth and general exaggeration in the account of the manner in which the anti-Royalist members of the House of Commons contrived to enrich themselves, which was published after the abrupt dissolution of the Long Parliament—cupidity and corruption, whether in the malappropriation of public money or the transfer of private property subjected to forfeit and sequestration, were as shameless, even amongst the more respectable patriots of "the Supreme Council," as might be expected from representatives who had long ceased to hold themselves accountable to constituents. But though Pym is accused by Clarendon of a due share in the preva-

lent frailty, the accusation is much too unsupported to allow us to accept against Pym himself the evidence on which he would have ruthlessly condemned an opponent. For he was a hearty hater; and whether sincerely suspicious or politically uncharitable, he deepened every shadow that fell upon an adversary. Honest Jack Lee, more than a century later, vehemently upbraided some fellow Whig for betraying the interests of the party in a chance remark, "that the Duke of Richmond (then separated from the Whigs) was a very handsome man." Jack Lee was a politician after Pym's own heart. Pym can see nothing but deformity when he looks at an antagonist. It would be ludicrous, had the consequences been less tragic, to observe the gravity with which he accepts the absurdest rumours as the most conclusive testimonies, if only those rumours affect the King or the King's friends; and how, undisturbed by the substantial dangers in which his panic, real or assumed, involves his country, he keeps the public in constant terror by denunciations of visionary massacres and impracticable plots. In the casuistry which a subtle intellect adapts to the popular understanding, Pym was unsurpassed. With equal skill he could defend as a sacred bulwark, or brush aside as a gossamer cobweb, the laws and constitution of the realm. In the prosecution of Strafford, when laws and constitution are plainly insufficient to establish the capital crime of high treason, Pym resolves society itself into its first principles, and mounts from the Plantagenets up to primeval Nature for a precedent that may crush his victim. Statutes fail, testimonies are defective; But, cries Pym, "the Earl is condemned by the light of Nature, the light of common reason—the element of all laws out of which they are derived, the end of all laws to which they were designed." But small account does Pym make of the "light of Nature," "the light of reason," and

the "element of all laws," when those venerable guides to human polity rebuke the vindictive passions which he invoked them to sanction and assist. That a wife should aid her husband in his peril is a truth more agreeable to the "light of Nature" and "the element of all laws" than that a political offender should be condemned to death, not by the laws of his country, but by abstract propositions on the origin of society. Yet when the Queen brings a small force to the assistance of Charles, Pym—the woman-lover, Pym—heads that barbarous impeachment against the Queen for high treason, which the just resentment of Mr. Hallam stigmatises as a "violation of the primary laws and moral sentiments that preserve human society."

But if Pym had the vehemence of Achilles, he had no less notably the craft of Ulysses. He could avail himself of the most dishonourable agencies, yet with such adroitness and plausibility that, in the eyes of the public, their dishonour did not sully himself. He converted into his most serviceable spy the mistress of Strafford, the confidante of Henrietta. The object of Lady Carlisle in her unspeakable perfidy must always remain a mystery. We dismiss, as a conjecture irreconcilable with the slightest knowledge of human nature, the supposition that she desired to avenge on Charles the death of Strafford, which was compassed by Pym; nor, though Pym was as much accused of licentiousness by his enemies as Strafford had been by his, do we believe that the intercourse between Pym and Lady Carlisle was that of criminal love. But she was debased into his compliant tool by the same power of character which had charmed her in Strafford. Nothing is more common amongst women of that stamp than a kind of slavish idolatry, not so much of intellectual eminence as of the reputation that belongs to it. They fall in love with celebrity, and flatter themselves that they thus gain equality with genius. He

reconciled the sanctimonious purism of the younger Vane to an act which in our day would exclude its perpetrator from the pale of gentlemen, and which barbed with a just insult Cromwell's exclamation, "The Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane!" We refer to the paper which cost Lord Strafford his head, and we take Vane's own account of his conduct respecting it. He said, "that his father, being in the North with the King the summer before, had sent up his keys to his secretary, then at Whitehall, and had written to him, his son, that he should take from him those keys which opened his boxes where his writings and evidences of his land were, to the end that he might cause an assurance to be perfected which concerned his wife." The case so far stands thus: the elder Vane, then Secretary of State, and as such sworn to keep secret the affairs of council within his cognizance, intrusts his son with the power to search amongst certain receptacles for a strictly private paper affecting that son's marriage settlement. The son was not then a youth new to public affairs, and ignorant of the sanctity of his father's obligations to secrecy. He himself had been a governor in Virginia; he was at that time a servant of the Crown as Treasurer of the Navy; he was therefore necessarily aware of the duties that attach to office, and the inviolable respect that is due to official documents. Well, then, the younger Vane, having found the private papers which alone he had been permitted to look for, and "despatched what depended thereon," states that "he had *the curiosity* to desire to see what was in a red velvet cabinet that stood with the other boxes, and therewith required the key of that cabinet from the secretary, as if he still wanted something towards the business his father had directed. Here, then, is a public man, a gentleman, who, trusted with keys for a special purpose confined to his own private affairs, coolly owns to the unutterable baseness and breach of trust of pry-

ing into a cabinet which he is not privileged to open, and tells his father's secretary a deliberate lie, in order to obtain the key. On opening this cabinet he finds that it contains the official papers which his father is sworn to keep secret from him as from all men. What would have been the first impulse of any man of the most ordinary honour? Surely to have veiled his eyes and relocked the cabinet. Young Vane on the contrary determinately sets to work to read them. He finds the very notes taken by his father as Secretary of State, part of them couched in cipher. He has thus his father's official honour and sworn oath in his hands. He still reads on—no cipher is sacred to him; and having discovered in these notes something that appears to implicate the man with whom, by the way, himself and his father have a personal quarrel, he deems himself bound in conscience to communicate the contents to some person of better judgment than himself. And the person he selects out of the whole world to show the notes officially taken by his father at the King's council-board, and the implications therein contained against his father's official colleague, is the head of the opposition to the King, and the bitterest and most ruthless personal enemy of the man against whom he has detected an evidence which it was dishonour and perfidy in himself to have seen. He shows it to Pym, lets Pym take a copy of it; and, then, without a word to his father, replaces it in the velvet cabinet. We take the younger Vane's own account, and do not add to it Lord Clarendon's belief that the whole was a trick between the two Vanes for the purpose of destroying Strafford, against whom they had a grudge. And we know not which conveys a lower estimate of personal honour—the act itself, or the unconscious ignoring of the most self-evident obligations of social life with which the tale was confessed and gloried in.

The use made of the document is of a piece with

the manner in which it was obtained. Though the pretence for giving to Pym a copy of it was the imminent danger with which the kingdom wăs threatened, it was kept concealed for several months, and the secret possession of it thus led to the fraudulently-obtained introduction of the monstrous clause in the bill of attainder against Lord Strafford, "to make one witness, with divers circumstances, as good as two."

With regard to Strafford himself, he was so formidable to liberty, both from his designs and from his genius, that the popular party were justified in all attempts to remove him from the king's councils, and incapacitate him from returning to them. But his sentence was an outrage on the laws of England, and the speech in which St. John, as Solicitor-General, stated that, "though the testimony against Strafford was not clear, yet in this way of bill private satisfaction to each man's conscience was sufficient, and that the Earl had no title to plead law, because he had broken the law," was an exposition of principle that made every life in England insecure.

Pym's political opinions at the commencement of the Long Parliament were not extreme. His intimacy with the Earl of Bedford, so long as that great nobleman lived to influence the councils of the popular party, combined with his own worldly sense to keep him aloof from the democratic rant of a Haselrig and the theological crotchets of a Vane. Even after the Earl of Bedford's death "he was not," says Clarendon, "of those furious resolutions against the Church as the other leading men were. . . . . Mr. Pym was concerned and passionate in the jealousies of religion, and much troubled with the countenance which had been given to those opinions that had been imputed to Arminius, yet himself professed to be very entire to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England." And in civil polity, Mr. Forster truly observes. "Even Hamp-

den's accession, after his return from Scotland, to what was called the Root-and-branch Party of the State had not entirely carried Pym along with it." But if Pym's political tenets were comparatively temperate, such temperance was rendered practically valueless by the heat of his political animosities. Mr. Hallam ascribes the errors of the Commons in the Long Parliament "to the excess of two passions, resentment and distrust." And the chief cause of Pym's popularity was the conspicuous fidelity with which he represented those two passions in their excess. Thus, partly by temper, partly by position as a political leader, he was rapidly carried on to a course of action utterly inconsistent with the theoretical doctrines which he had the credit of holding, and was soon only to be distinguished from the Strodes and the Haselrigs by the superior capacity with which he gave to violent aggressions the character of sage precautions. In times of revolutionary excitement or popular agitation, no leader is so dangerous to order as he who, commending violence, makes the public believe he himself has no wish to be violent. For moderation seems to be struck out of all councils which the time can admit, when the man who is respected as moderate heads the men who are feared as extreme. To the Root-and-branch Party Pym gave vigour and authority precisely because he did not wholly belong to it. And many a timid politician became gradually familiarised to the destruction of the monarchy, till the scaffold of Charles rose above its wrecks, by that phraseology of decorous moderation in which Mr. Pym — no Root-and-branch man—clothed the darkest insinuations against the King with professions of devoted affection for His Majesty; and, insisting on the sanctity of the constitution, argued all its elements away.

Such was the man who, as Clarendon tersely expresses it, "was the most able to do hurt that hath

lived in any time." Such was the man who, had he so pleased, was at that time the most able to do good. In his strong hands were peace and the freedom already won; civil war, and its inexorable consequence—the subjugation of freedom to military force. Pym made his choice: we will examine it.

The first proceedings of the Long Parliament were characterised by the vigour of patriots and the wisdom of statesmen, who saw clearly before them objects essential to good government, and compatible with the genius of the constitution they reformed. Within less than a year from the opening of that Parliament the Triennial Bill was passed; ship-money declared to be illegal; the power of arbitrary taxation by the Sovereign annulled; the Star-chamber abolished. The Court of High Commission, with the jurisdiction of inferior but oppressive tribunals—such as the Courts of the President and Council of the North, of Wales and the Welch Marches—no longer obstructed the broad and open current of English justice. The unpopular and feudal encroachments of the Crown in forest boundaries were permanently repressed; and not only was the normal constitution of England thus purified from the abuses which Charles and his predecessors had introduced, but, as Mr. Hallam remarks, "it was formed such nearly as it now exists."

The merit of these great achievements is not to be ascribed solely to the men who, at a subsequent period under Pym, constituted the popular party. It is due in an equal degree to the politician of a more temperate school, amongst whom Lord Falkland is conspicuous even less for the culture of an exquisite intellect than the sincerity of an incorruptible patriotism. A royalist peer, Lord Andover, made the first motion for the abolition of the Star Chamber. Hyde was Chairman of the Committee which brought in the Bill for abolishing the Court of York. Members of either House of Parliament in

whom the pride of descent and the interests of property gave reasonable hostages for the safety of order amidst changes propitious to freedom, were the earliest champions of reforms that retrenched the royal prerogative and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. And it is noticeable that foremost in the van of reform are the names of those whose families had held high place in the courts or councils of the Tudors—the Russells, the Sidneys, the Seymours, the Cecils, the Lyttons. The amount of property in the House of Commons itself was immense, and must be recognised as a principal cause of the paramount influence it so rapidly acquired. In one of the earlier parliaments of the reign the wealth of the members of the Lower House was computed at three times (at least) the amount of the wealth to be found in the Upper; it could not have been much less at the commencement of that Long Parliament which, after the civil war, recruited its emptying benches with fanatical adventurers whose fortunes were as needy as their spirit was sordid and their intelligence savage. We approach the time when the phalanx, hitherto united in the constitutional redress of genuine grievances, became divided: when Falkland was severed from the side of Pym—when Holborne, the eloquent lawyer against ship-money, argued no less warmly in defence of the Anglican Church:—we must ask ourselves to which of these two classes of reformers was rational liberty the most indebted: the class that was contented with obtaining those solid results which at the distance of two centuries we now enjoy, or the class that deliberately risked the chances of civil war for the sake of objects which, as we will show later, have never been attained to this day,—and never could be attained without the annihilation of all the tempered attributes by which the freedom of a limited monarchy saves a state from the uncontrolled despotism of a popular chamber, or the iron order of military rule.

We must, however, start from one capital cause of all the later calamities that befell the time, and in which all subdivisions of the popular party must share the blame. That cause is found in the first direct violation on the part of the Long Parliament, not only of the English Constitution, but of every principle of safe government, by which monarchy and representative institutions can be brought into concord. We mean the Act hurried through all its stages in the House of Commons in two days, and by which the Parliament could not be dissolved without its own consent. It was passed by the Lords simultaneously with the attainder of Strafford, and it was pretended that the Act was necessary to prevent Charles from saving his Minister by dissolving the Parliament that impeached him.

But the Lords, in a conference with the Commons, had suggested an amendment that would have equally disabled the King from quashing the proceedings against Strafford, while it would have saved the State from an outrage by which in fact the People were set aside long before the Monarchy was abolished. The Lords proposed in this conference that the Act against the dissolution of Parliament without the consent of both Houses should be limited to two years; if, therefore, the popular leaders had only required a security against Charles for the purpose of justice upon Strafford, this amendment would have been accepted as effectual for the object in view; unhappily the Commons adhered to their original demand,—the Lords yielded,—the King consented,—and in three days the Constitution of England was virtually destroyed. A House of Commons was changed into an irresponsible tribunal, independent of the most salutary prerogative of the Crown, and only by its own consent made amenable to constituents for the use of its powers.

It is evident that thus, if the dissensions between King and Commons continued, there could be no

appeal to the people for arbitration except by the sword; and by this Act, therefore, men who looked towards the chances of the future were compelled to familiarize their eyes to the prospect of civil war.

But whatever may be said of the pretexts for this calamitous measure, the House of Commons had thus obtained precisely that, the alleged want of which constitutes the apology made by Mr. Forster and other admirers of the extreme popular party for the subsequent exactions and excesses to which that party was impelled. They obtained security against the King's practical power to restore arbitrary rule. The House of Commons had already deprived the King of all means to obtain money without their consent: they proved in their proceedings against Strafford and Laud the stern reality of their privilege to hold responsible by the heaviest penalties the advisers whom the Crown might select; and by thus securing their own continued existence, they effected a guarantee against the King, immeasurably stronger than any which at this hour the reformed House of Commons has against any Sovereign who may harbour designs similar to those ascribed to Charles I., and cover those designs by the popular qualities and the genius for affairs, the want of which made Charles himself impotent against his enemies and fatal to his friends.

We think that Mr. Forster loses sight of this security throughout the whole of his reasonings, and that it never ought to be forgotten by those who look into his animated pages for the vindication of the Grand Remonstrance and its impassioned partisans.

We now approach the date of this famous memorial. Let us pause for a moment and allow Mr. Forster "to seize the occasion to observe where some of the prominent people sit."

"The member whose manuscript record chiefly has been quoted, Sir Simonds D'Ewes, will guide us to the knowledge here and there, in jotting down his own speeches: for as it was

then the custom to avoid mention as well of the place represented as of the member's name, the principal mode of indicating a previous speaker was by some well-known personal quality, or by his position in the house. Sir Simonds himself sat usually by the Speaker's chair, on the lowermost form close by the south end of the clerk's table; and there, whatever the subject of debate might be, or the excitement going on around him, this precise self-satisfied puritan gentleman sat, writing-apparatus forming part of his equipment, his eyes close to the paper (for their sight was defective), and ever busily taking his Notes; but it was his custom, when he spoke, to go up two steps higher, that he might more easily be heard by the whole house. In this position, Mr. Harry Marten, the member for Berkshire, was, 'the gentleman below.' Mr. Pym, the acknowledged chief of the majority of the Commons, is ever in his 'usual place near the Bar,' just beyond the gallery on the same right-hand side of the house at entering. Sir John Culpeper, member for Kent, and so soon to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, is 'the gentleman on the other side of the way.' He sat upon the left-hand side; and near him, most generally together, sat Hyde and Falkland; Mr. Geoffrey Palmer, the member for Stamford, and Sir John Strangways, sitting near. On the same side at the upper end, on the Speaker's right, sat the elder Vane, member for Wilton, for a few days longer Secretary of State and Treasurer of the Household; near whom were other holders of office. Sir Thomas Jermyn, his Majesty's Comptroller, who sat for Bury St. Edmund's; Sir Edward Herbert, the Attorney-General, who sat for Old Sarum; Oliver St. John, the Solicitor-General, member for Totness, still holding the office in the King's service which had failed to draw him over to the King's side; Mr. Coventry, member for Evesham and one of the King's house; and young Harry Vane, member for Hull, and Joint-treasurer of the Navy; all sat in this quarter, on the Speaker's right. Near them sat also Mr. Edward Nicholas, Clerk of the Council, soon to be *Sir* Edward and Secretary of State in place of Windebank, now an anxious auditor and spectator of this memorable debate, which he was there to report to the King. Between these members and Hyde, on the same side of the house, sat the member for Wilton, Sir Benjamin Rudyard; Sir Walter Earle; William Strode; and lawyer Glyn, the member for Westminster. Mr. Herbert Price, the member for Brecon, with Mr. Wilmot, member for Tamworth, and a knot of young courtiers, sat at the lower end of the house on the same side, immediately on the left at entering. John Hampden sat on the other side, behind Pym; and between him and Harry Marten, sat Edmund Waller; on one of the back benches, Cromwell; not far from him, Denzil Hollis; and under the gallery, the member for Oxford University, the learned Mr. Selden. Near him sat lawyer Maynard, the other member for Totness; and over them, in the gallery itself, that successful lawyer Mr. Holborne; Sir Edward

Dering; and the member for Leicestershire, Sir Arthur Haselrig. But our list must come to a close."

This is a masterly example of the best and truest kind of historical scene-painting. The hints from which the sketch is furnished forth could only be gleaned by a mind quick to discern and trained to discriminate, while they are so carefully arranged as not to violate but to render vivid the fidelity of the outlines to which they lend the freshness of colour and the movement of life. So much for the scene. A word or two now on the time in which it is enacted.

The great reforms we have cited have been effected. The execution of Strafford has deprived the King of the only man who united the desire for arbitrary government with a genius equal to the accumulating difficulties of so criminal an ambition. The King himself, with an acuteness that he rarely evinced, has recognised that simple mode of reconciling the powers of a free Parliament with the safety of monarchical institutions, by which in our own day the business of the State is carried on. He has sought to form an administration from the party which had a prevalent influence in Parliament. Through the patriotic interposition of the Earl of Bedford, the popular movement was to be regulated to the ends compatible with constitutional monarchy by imposing on the conscience of its leaders the responsibilities that attach to advisers of the Crown. Pym was to have been Chancellor of the Exchequer, Denzil Hollis Secretary of State, Hampden, Lord Essex, and Lord Say to have had suitable places in the Administration. Unhappily the Earl of Bedford's sudden death frustrated these negotiations; but at least they were assurances that the King was not unprepared to admit of that solution of the difficulties of the time, which is alone consonant with the genius of the free Government that the popular party sought to effect; and even in spite of the Earl's death, Charles at least made such advances

in that wise direction as were in his power. Lord Essex, the popular idol, was appointed Lord Chamberlain; St. John, the intimate associate of Hampden and Pym, had been appointed Solicitor-General at the beginning of the Parliament. It was the obvious duty of calm statesmen and true patriots to have hailed these attempts to establish Parliamentary government on its natural basis, and to have assisted and encouraged the King in maturing out of such attempts an administration which in itself would be another guarantee for the liberties already achieved. We do not think, therefore, that Mr. Forster justly represents the conduct of the men he refers to, or the character of the time he depicts, by such a paragraph as this:—

> "Immediately after the execution of Strafford, which Hyde and his associates helped more largely than any other section of the House to accomplish, they began steadily and secretly to employ every artifice and all the advantages which their position in the Commons gave them to bring about a reaction favourable to the King."

We think it a more correct interpretation of their policy to say, that as with Strafford's death died the last chance of restoring arbitrary rule—except indeed by the force of arms in the chances of civil war—so the more temperate and far-seeing members of the popular party wished no longer to inflame those contests between the Monarchy and the Commons, which might end in the destruction of one or the other; but rather to reconcile both, as in case of disagreement they would be reconciled now, through the medium of councillors whom the confidence of Parliament might commend to the service of the Crown. Hyde did in this but carry out the same policy by which the Earl of Bedford would have transferred Hampden and Pym from the lead of the Opposition to the guidance of the King. Nor does Mr. Forster appear to us to have any warrant for the assumption that, "with so much semblance of amended administration

and such pretences of half-popular measures as the ingenuity of Hyde could furnish, if Charles could be brought to concede only so much, there was yet the means of striking a heavy-blow for recovery of the old prerogative."

For Hyde himself, though no doubt he became more and more of a Royalist in proportion as the uses of Royalty were made clear by its trial and fall—in proportion as liberty was whirled on through the phases of fanatic revolution, to be debased by a Barebones and deposed by a Cromwell; yet, at the time Mr. Forster refers to, Hyde would certainly have aided no blow for the recovery of the "old prerogative," which, up to that moment, he had sought to check and abridge; nor do the State papers composed by himself, as the Royal replies and manifestoes, advance other doctrines than those which at this day would be accepted by the advisers of a constitutional Sovereign. And we are sure that not Pym himself could more stubbornly than Falkland have resisted the restoration of those arbitrary powers against which no man had contended with steadier courage or nobler passion. Clarendon says, "nor had he (Lord Falkland) any veneration for the Court, but only such a loyalty to the King as the law required from him." This is clear from the dislike for Falkland which the more heated Cavaliers entertained, and their resentful fear of the conciliatory counsels which he urged upon the King after the war broke out.

The concessions that, whether yielded by or wrung from Charles at the commencement of the Long Parliament, had already changed a despotic into a limited monarchy, necessarily produced the effect which is the immediate consequence of great reforms in ancient institutions; they divided the Liberal party by making clear the differences amongst its members, which had been compromised or postponed till the objects on which there was agreement in common were achieved.

Falkland, for instance, was desirous of retrenching

the civil powers of the hierarchy, and had differed from "his inseparable friend" Hyde, in speaking in favour of the Bill for taking away the Bishops' votes in Parliament. But Falkland was equally desirous of preserving the Anglican Church itself; and, when six months after he changed his opinion as to the Bishops' votes, and opposed a proposition similar to that which he had before approved, his public reply to Hampden's reproof for inconsistency seems to us a more intelligible excuse than it does to Mr. Forster, viz, that "he had been persuaded to believe many things which he had since found to be untrue;" and when Mr. Forster says, "that what the alleged misrepresentations were has never been explained," he has overlooked Clarendon's statement* as to the question in point, viz., that Falkland had declared "that Mr. Hampden had assured him that, if that Bill might pass, nothing more would be attempted to the prejudice of the Church."

In a word, that happened then which happens daily now—moderate men discovered that the ulterior objects of associates with whom they had previously acted were such as, either long concealed or lately ripened out of new events, differed essentially from the objects for which they had at the onset accepted a companionship and shared a struggle. And with this separation of party, as necessarily there flowed back towards the King much of the loyalty that, lost by the errors of earlier misrule, was conciliated by the redress of grievances and the surrender of noxious powers. For the first time in his reign, Charles found partisans in men of enlightened opinions, of popular services, of great weight in Parliamentary discussion. Out of a loyalty thus dignified, not unreasoning and servile, the public began to gather confidence that the King might gain wise councillors, and the remaining differences between the Crown and the Commons be peacefully adjusted. It was con-

* B. iii. p. 152.

fessedly to stem that current of returning loyalty and to convert that growing hope into fresh distrust, that Pym thus early framed and subsequently proposed the Grand Remonstrance.

The debates on this momentous question are given by Mr. Forster with a breadth and fulness of detail worthy of their importance. All that zeal, research, force of style, and felicity of arrangement can do to vindicate this measure and condemn its opponents has been done by Mr. Forster; but we must confess that we rise from the perusal of the case, thus eloquently advocated and adorned, with a profound conviction that the Grand Remonstrance was either a great blunder or a great crime. A great blunder, if Pym and his party were sincere in the opinions they professed, and cherished no desire for the abolition of monarchy and the downfall of the constitution; a great crime if, for the sake of such objects, they conspired to deepen the breach between large classes of their countrymen, and submit liberty and order to the hazards of civil war.

We think that Mr. Hallam, who is certainly not more partial to Charles than Mr. Forster himself, states the substance of the Remonstrance fairly, if succinctly, when he says, "This, being a recapitulation of all the grievances and misgovernment that had existed since his (Charles's) accession, which his acquiescence in so many measures of redress ought, according to the common courtesy due to Sovereigns, to have cancelled, was hardly capable of answering any other purpose than that of reanimating the discontents almost appeased, and guarding the people against the confidence they were beginning to place in the King's sincerity." Indeed, Mr. Forster himself does not deny that such were the objects, and these objects he employs his ingenuity to vindicate. We grant that there was enough in Charles's character to justify all reasonable precautions against the duplicity which constituted its main defect both as king

and man. But we say with Mr. Hallam, that, "if he were intended to reign at all, or reign with any portion either of the prerogatives of an English king or the respect claimed by every sovereign, the Remonstrance of the Commons would but prolong an irritation incompatible with public tranquillity." The Remonstrance itself was unfair in conception, exaggerated in statement, and a violent breach of constitutional practice in the manner in which it was introduced and shaped. Unfair in conception: because to enumerate evils that have been legally redressed under an existing system and a reigning sovereign, is to afford a reasonable presumption that the evils remaining may be equally redressed under the same sovereign and the same system; while this enumeration was so worded as to appeal to popular passion against both. Exaggerated in statement: for, as if the errors of Charles's earlier government were not sufficiently grave of themselves, the Remonstrance does not scruple to violate truth in the endeavour to heighten and to multiply them. It states, for instance, that the loss of the Rochelle fleet by the help of our shipping sent forth and delivered to the French was in opposition to the *advice* of Parliament, and led to the loss of that important place. But the plain fact is, not only that Parliament gave no advice on the matter, but that it was wholly unacquainted with the course Charles had adopted until the consequences became known; nor was the fleet nor the town of Rochelle lost by the help of our shipping, for the mariners of the English ships sent deserted rather than fight against the Huguenots. Again, the Remonstrance accuses Charles of forsaking the Elector Palatine by not continuing the war with Spain, when the fact was that for continuing that war the Parliament left him wholly without money. And to these dangerous attempts to envenom the national spirit against Charles's earlier administration, was added the more inflammable accusation

against himself and his councillors, of originating and sustaining the rebellions and massacres in Ireland, upon evidence incredible to all dispassionate reasoners at that day—in our day wholly set aside—and in the teeth of Charles's earnest, but fruitless, appeals to his Parliament for help to put down the rebellion and punish the massacres. The Remonstrance was flagrantly unconstitutional in the mode and form in which it was sent forth. There is no valid reply to Sir John Culpeper's argument that all remonstrances should, by the spirit and the practice of the constitution, be addressed to the King and not to the people, because it belonged to the King only to redress grievances. But this memorial was not addressed to the King: it was an appeal to the people against the King. The sovereign is spoken of as a third person, and is made a defendant, with the Commons for his accuser and the public for his judge. This form of document was in itself a revolution without precedent in the history of the monarchy. It may be said, as it was said, that something in the nature of the particular time justified such departure from the constitution. But the particular time was one in which Charles had committed no overt act to justify a measure so aggressive; a time in which, as it is acknowledged, he was not alienating public opinion, but winning it back; and even the miserable plea that he was suspected of abetting the Irish rebellion, or that while in Scotland he was privy to attempts on Hamilton and Argyle, could not be urged: for the Remonstrance had in reality been predetermined by the revolutionary leaders before the rebellion broke out in Ireland or the King had departed for Scotland. Still more unsound was the pretext that the Parliament required an apology for its past proceedings. As Culpeper truly said, "Parliament had not been scandaled by any public act, and needed not, therefore, any public declaration to clear itself."

Revolution is always begun when there is an

appeal made to a people through unprecedented channels, foreign to their constitution, in denunciation of an established executive. Now, supposing that this was one of those rare crises in history in which such a revolution was inevitable or called for, it clearly would have become the one House of Parliament to have sought the co-operation of the other in giving to such an appeal the requisite character of dispassionate solemnity. But Pym and his party insisted on making the Remonstrance an act of the Commons, wholly apart from the other branch of the Legislature, and that upon arguments quoted from Pym's speech by Mr. Forster, which were utterly fallacious;—the one argument being that "many of the Lords were accused in the Remonstrance," the other that "it dealt throughout with subjects that had been only agitated in that House." The last argument is a direct untruth. The Remonstrance dealt with all the grievances of the reign which had been redressed by Act of Parliament and agitated alike in both Houses. And with regard to the first argument, members of the House of Commons were, in reality, as much accused as were members of the House of Lords; and unless the Commons meant to implicate, not individual peers, but the Upper Chamber itself, as well as the Throne, in the appeal to the people, justice demanded that the Lords at least should have the opportunity to consider and discuss the accusation levelled at any of their body.

The whole proceedings connected with this firebrand were in accordance with its violent and ominous nature. In the debate that the Declaration should be printed, Hyde had said that, "if the motion were persisted in, he should ask leave of the House to have liberty to enter his protest." On this a debate ensued, when, about one o'clock of the morning (we avail ourselves here of Mr. Forster's spirited narrative),

"Mr. Geoffrey Palmer, a lawyer of the Middle Temple, stood up. He should not be satisfied, he said, for himself or those

around him unless a day should be at once appointed for discussion whether the right to protest did not exist in that House, and meanwhile he would move, with reference to such grave discussion, that the Clerk should note the names of all those whose claim to protest would then have to be determined.

"At these words the excitement broke out afresh; loud cries of 'All! All!' burst from every side where any of Hyde's party sat, and Palmer, carried beyond his first intention by the passion of the moment, cried out unexpectedly that he *did* for himself then and there protest, for himself and all the rest—'of his mind,' he afterward declared that he meant to have added, but for the storm which suddenly arose.

"The word *All* had fallen like a lighted match upon gunpowder. It was taken up, and passed from mouth to mouth, with an exasperation bordering on frenzy; and to those who in after years recalled the scene, under that sudden glare of excitement after a sitting of fifteen hours,—the worn-out weary assemblage, the ill-lighted dreary chamber, the hour sounding One after midnight, confused loud cries on every side breaking forth unexpectedly, and startling gestures of violence accompanying them,—it presented itself to the memory as a very Valley of the Shadow of Death. 'All! all!' says D'Ewes, was cried from side to side; 'and some waved their hats over their heads, and other took their swords in their scabbards out of their belts, and held them by the pummels in their hands, setting the lower part on the ground; so as, if God had not prevented it, there was very great danger that mischief might have been done. All those who cried *All, all*, and did the other particulars, were of the number of those that were against the Remonstrance.' And among them was the promising young gentleman of the King's house, Mr. Philip Warwick, the member for Radnor, who bethought him, as we have seen, of that brief Scriptural comparison from the wars of Saul and David, his application of which comprised all that, until now, was known to us of this extraordinary scene. He thought of what Abner said to Joab, and Joab to Abner, when they met on either side of the pool of Gibeon; and now, having arisen at the bidding of their leaders to make trial of prowess, their young men caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side, and so fell down together; a result which might have followed here, had not the sagacity and great calmness of Mr. Hampden, by a short speech, prevented it.

"It is not perhaps difficult to imagine, from what D'Ewes goes on to say of the short but memorable speech, with what exquisite tact and self-control this profound master of debate calmed down the passions of that dangerous hour. He saw at once that the motion for printing could not then with safety be persisted in; and, reminding the House that there might be many who, having supported the Remonstrance, might yet be opposed to the printing of it, he asked how any one could so far

know the minds of such as to presume to enter a protest for *them?* 'Some who were against the printing of the Remonstrance,' says D'Ewes, 'yet disavowed Mr. Palmer's desiring to have a protestation entered in their names; *and Mr. Hampden demanded of him how he could know other men's minds?* To whom Mr. Palmer answered, having leave of the House to speak, that he having once before heard the cry, 'All, All,' he had thereupon desired to have the said protestation entered in all their names.'"

But if Hampden had the merit of allaying the storm, Pym, the next day, must bear the blame of reviving it. There can be no doubt that Hyde was wrong in supposing the Commons had the right to protest, which custom has made a privilege of the Lords. There is as little doubt that Palmer, in the heat of the moment, had committed an indiscretion in his motion. But there is no doubt the other way, that Hyde had a perfect Parliamentary right to raise the question whether or not there was anything in the regulations and precedents established in one House of Parliament which should forbid its members to claim such a mode of recording opinion as had been adopted in the practice of the other House; and that, when Palmer had explained the intention of his cry, and apologised for any unpremeditated inadvertence, liberty of speech required that he should have no further punishment than a reprimand from the Chair. It seems scarcely credible that for this trivial fault the Pym party insisted that Mr. Palmer should be sent to the Tower, and that he was actually kept in that prison from the 26th of November to the 8th of December, on the morning of which day his humble petition, in which he acknowledged his offence and the justice of the House, obtained his discharge.

When the Remonstrance and the Petition conjoined with it were presented to the King by a committee appointed for that purpose, Charles, after saying very justly, "I suppose you do not expect me to answer now to so long a petition?" and adding, "As to this business of yours, I shall give you an

answer with as much speed as the weightiness of the business will permit"—accompanied the Royal message with a request that there might be no publishing of the Declaration till the House had received his answer. In the printing of the Remonstrance a few days after the Royal request to the contrary, Mr. Forster, we think, successfully vindicates the House of Commons from the charge of breach of faith with the King which Clarendon brings against it. The House of Commons had given no acquiescence to the request made by Charles. But we do not the less consider that the defiance of a request so reasonable in itself was an outrage upon that decent respect which is the safest privilege that subjects can concede to a sovereign. Having sought the redress of grievances in the Remonstrance, the House of Commons were bound to wait for a reply before calling in the popular passions to their aid, by the circulation of a vehement attack on the entire reign and character of their Sovereign. And when Mr. Forster so far confirms the expressions of Clarendon, "that that fatal Remonstrance poisoned the hearts of the people, and was the first inlet to the inundations," by saying "that such expressions are so many tributes to the vigour and capacity of his opponents, and to the largeness and wisdom of the outwork they had taken when they launched this Great Remonstrance," it seems to us that the simple reply to Mr. Forster is to be found in this fact, that the Remonstrance, having thus rendered a civil war inevitable, not only risked, but actually lost, that for which the Remonstrance contended. Mr. Forster cites as a proof of the gravity of the conjuncture, in final and lasting vindication of the Remonstrance, Cromwell's declaration, that "if the Remonstrance had been rejected he would have sold all he had the next morning, and never seen England again." The man who thus spoke was the man who foresaw in the effect of the Remonstrance the opening to his ambition—the man

who was enabled by the Remonstrance, not only to take the head from his Sovereign's shoulders, but the mace from the House of Commons. The Pym party, and all they strove for, disappeared amongst fierce fanatics, as the ignorant passions and the armed force they had invoked became the agents of hypocrisy and ambition. And when Liberty returned again with the advent of William of Orange, what returned with it?—the reforms demanded by Pym and his party—the abolition of prelacy? the substitution of a Presbyterian Kirk for the English hierarchy? laws against Papacy, as severe and unwise as were ever hatched against heretics in the conclave of an inquisition? the right of the House of Commons to the command of the army, and its more than Royal prerogative as the Supreme Council, whose simple ordinances had the force of law without assent of King or Lords? Not one of these things, be they good or bad. The reforms which were re-established, and which we now enjoy, were the reforms *not of Pym and St. John. but of Hyde and Falkland*—the reforms already achieved before the Grand Remonstrance was flung forth to substitute the soldier for the reformer—the reforms which the opponents of the Remonstrance sought to save from the perilous lottery into which the advocates of the Remonstrance cast them. All that we owe to the violent men are the military usurpation of Oliver Cromwell, and the reaction to arbitrary monarchy under Charles II.

But the Remonstrance is printed. Events press on rapidly. Charles is hurried towards the fatal error which might have been anticipated by those who sought with pertinacious and malignant craft to exasperate all his infirmities of temper. But before we come to the attempted Arrest of the Five Members, it is at least just to Charles to set forth some of those insults that might have stung to imprudence a much calmer judgment, and some of those outrages on his most unquestionable prerogatives which might have

misled a prince much more temperate into the belief that aggression on his part had become necessary for the defence of his throne.

When, after the execution of Strafford, Charles went to Scotland, the Commons followed up an endeavour to appoint "a protector of the realm, to pass laws in his absence, without having recourse to the King," by ordinances that generally set aside his authority. In August, one to disarm recusants; in November, one authorising the Earl of Leicester to raise men for the defence of Ireland without a warrant under the Great Seal. Monarchy itself is incompatible with the assumptions in these acts, by which subjects are armed or disarmed without the assent of their monarch. Under pretext of seeing that the Articles of Pacification were executed, a committee of six are appointed to attend the King—in reality as spies upon his actions. It is with pain that we find the lofty name of Hampden among those debased by such an office. The care of this committee was to keep alive a chronic state of alarm throughout the kingdom: they communicate to the Parliamentary Committee, which sat in London during the recess, "that when there was a design in England to seduce the King's army and interrupt the Parliament, there was the like design at that time in Scotland; that the principal party named in that design in Scotland, the Lord Crauford, is a person suspected to be popishly affected, and therefore may have correspondence with the like party in England." Upon these apprehensions the Commons propose, and the Lords agree, that there should be a strong guard kept in the cities of London and Westminster, and care taken for the defence of the whole kingdom; and that an express message be sent to the Committee of both Houses in Scotland that the Parliament of England was ready to give the Scots all necessary assistance against those who should disturb the peace;

and the same day they order the Earl of Essex, who held commission from the King as General of the South of the Trent, to place a guard at Westminster for the security of Parliament, which was done.

These flagrant usurpations of regal authority, intended to excite the terror of England to the prejudice of Charles, were based upon an "incident," as it was called in the jargon of the day, that furnished not the slightest justification for proceedings so revolutionary. The account of this incident is given thus by Burnet in his Life of the Marquis of Hamilton. "A gentleman not known to the Marquis of Hamilton brought to him and the Earl of Argyle the discovery of a plot which he said was laid for their lives and the Earl of Lanerick's, which he said he could justify by one witness who was invited to the execution of it. The Marquis carried the tale to the King without naming particulars, which could not be done safely by the law of Scotland, since he had but one witness to prove the treason by. The King desired him to sift the thing to the bottom, and bring him what further evidence he could find. In the evening other presumptions were brought to the Marquis, but no clear evidence, and Hamilton, with the other Scots Lords, and half-a-dozen servants, went to his country-house, twelve miles from Edinburgh, and sent his excuse to the King with an account of the reasons. The Scots parliament took the whole matter into consideration; those who had given the information owned what they had said; those on whom the plot was fixed did as positively deny all. So that, no clear proof being brought, the Scots Parliament could come to no other decision, but that the Lords had good reason to withdraw themselves, and so they were invited to return to their places in Parliament, which they did." Whether we accept this version of the story, or that of Lord Clarendon, which implicates Montrose in a positive offer to Charles to kill

both Argyle and Hamilton*—an expedient "which the King abhorred"—still it is indisputable that Charles himself courted the fullest and most public inquiry, a present trial in the face of the Scots Parliament, and even shed tears in the passion with which he urged it; and obvious it is, that the Scots Parliament was the proper tribunal to sift the truth, and was certainly not then in a humour to spare the King, against whom the investigation that ensued could discover nothing. And it was on this matter which the Scots Parliament had full power to examine, that the English Parliament set aside the Constitution of England, and ordered the King's generals to dispose of the King's forces without the King's orders. The Rebellion in Ireland is raging; the House of Commons send instructions to their Committee of spies in Scotland, that they had just come to believe that the conspiracies and convulsions in Ireland were but the effects of the counsels of those who continued in credit, authority, and employment about His Majesty; and they accompany a prayer in itself constitutional and proper, if there were any counsellors against whom they could prove such a charge, with the following insolent and gratuitous threat,—"that if His Majesty did not condescend to their supplication, *they* should be forced to resolve upon some way of defending Ireland from the rebels, and of securing themselves from mischievous counsels and designs, and commend those aids and contributions which should be raised for the reducing of Ireland to the custody and disposing of such persons of honour and fidelity as *they* had cause to confide in."

* See, however, 'Quarterly Review,' vol. lxxix. p. 10, where Mr. Mark Napier's defence of his hero is noticed. The main point in that defence is certainly a very strong one; that Montrose was, at the period referred to, a close prisoner in the hands of the enemies of himself and of the King, and could have had no personal access to Charles; while the assertion of Clarendon (who was not then in Scotland) is, that the proposal was made by Montrose to the King in a personal interview.

It is impossible not to see in such language the complete negation of all the powers assigned to a Sovereign, however limited his functions. And the affront was the more ungracious, because Charles had devoted himself, during his stay in Scotland, to the most liberal concessions to the popular party there; and, while his friends complained, not without justice, that they were neglected, preferments were lavished on Presbyterian preachers, and dignities on the popular chiefs.*

When Charles returned to London, having, by large surrenders of his prerogative and some bitter compromise of human pride, fully succeeded in his mission of pacifying Scotland,—when the Great Remonstrance so cruelly turns back the loyalty with which he is greeted in his metropolis,—though he very properly disallows the guard which Lord Essex had granted to Parliament during his absence, he offers another which the House of Commons refuse as appointed by the King—implying thereby that it is against the King himself they desire a guard. And on a tailor declaring that he had, when walking in the fields, overheard persons whom he did not know talk of a conspiracy to murder 108 Lords and Commoners by 108 ruffians, at the price of 10*l*. a Lord and 2*l*. a Commoner, the House of Commons order all priests and Jesuits to be seized, and the deputy-lieutenants of suspected counties to put the people in a posture of defence. While these sturdy patriots, with swords by their sides, were thus tenderly careful of their own safety, what is their conduct to the men whose age and whose calling precluded them from self-defence? Twelve bishops, not threatened by the vague report of a tailor walking in the fields but

* Charles had the utmost difficulty in obtaining Montrose's release from prison only two days before his own departure from Scotland. Mr. Forster is in error when he says (p. 17) that "by the Crown's grace and favour Montrose was now (November, 1641) a Marquis." The warrant for his creation is dated at Oxford, the 4th May, 1644.

hustled, jostled, and affronted by a disorderly mob, send a protestation addressed to the King and the Lords, to the effect that, though "they had an undoubted right to sit and vote in Parliament, they had been menaced and assaulted by the multitude, and could no longer with safety attend their duty. For this reason they protest against all laws, votes, and statutes, as null and invalid, which should pass during the term of their constrained absence."*

No man acquainted with English law, or with the plainest principles of civilized justice, can deny that the Prayer and Protest in themselves are perfectly warranted by principle, and are only questionable as to the fact alleged, and as to the remedy required. In the Introductory Essay prefixed to his work on the Grand Remonstrance (a treatise admirable in the terse compactness of well-meditated thought) Mr. Forster does not fail to place amongst the most solid stepping-stones of English liberty the statute passed under Edward I., "That, forasmuch as election ought to be free, no man, by force of arms, nor by malice or menacing, should disturb any to make free election." The liberty which so commendably protects from menace the vote of an elector in the reign of Edward is surely not shocked if invoked to protect from menace the vote of a senator in the reign of Charles. If electors are obstructed from going to a poll, an election is vitiated; if senators are obstructed from going to a senate, of which their votes influence the decision, is it not, at least, a fair inquiry whether votes taken in their constrained absence are valid? Mr. Forster argues that the complaint of the Bishops was exaggerated. The Archbishop of York's gown was torn, but not, as Clarendon asserts, "torn off his back." This point is not for us to determine, it was one for the Lords at that time judicially to examine; it was for them to decide, 1st, whether the Bishops really were so

* Clarendon, B. iv. p. 140.

molested by the multitude as to justify their complaint of constrained absence; 2ndly, whether, if so, they should be protected, and in what manner; 3rdly, whether there was any reason or precedent for their plea that the votes taken in their absence were invalid. But to our mind nothing can excuse the monstrous iniquity by which the Commons actually impeached the Bishops for high-treason, sequestrated and imprisoned them, at the very moment when the Members of the Commons themselves were setting aside the Constitution, in order to guard their own persons, not from violence experienced, but from conspiracies rumoured. In their unscrupulous march towards the pure and simple despotism of an irresponsible tribunal, Pym and his party had shown as little respect for the rights of the subject as for the authority of the Crown. They not only sent to the Tower their own fellow Members for any expressions in the warmth of debate which offended their notions, but on evidence so frivolous that it might provoke a smile at the credulity that received it, and on the allegation of offences wholly foreign to their jurisdiction, without trial or hearing, they hurried the "delinquent" to prison; they invented, under the name of delinquent, a crime hitherto unknown to English law. Did an elector venture to speak without due admiration of the popular representatives, he was a "delinquent." They sent to prison petitioners in behalf of the Constitution, they encouraged the riotous mob which clamoured for its overthrow. When the Peers voted a Declaration against disorderly tumults, the Lower House refused to concur in the Declaration. "God forbid!" says Mr. Pym, when he was asked to exert his influence to discountenance these tumultuous assemblages, "that the people should be hindered from obtaining their just desires!" And when the sheriffs and justices appoint constables with watchers to protect the members assaulted on their way to either House, the Commons vote their orders

a breach of privilege, and send one of the justices to prison. In their violent intimidation of opponents, in their encouragement to the licence of the populace, Pym and his partisans strike at freedom on the one hand and provoke anarchy on the other. The King thus sees that all his concessions have been in vain; in vain equally to bring respect to his throne, or tranquillity to that social order with the care of which, as chief magistrate, he is charged. The Commons have arrogated powers unknown to the law, incompatible with any form of government recognised by the constitution; they have said to the King, in their instructions to their Committee in Scotland, "If you do not choose to obey us, we will do without you, levy our armies, and appoint their leaders." They have said to the House of Lords (in the Resolution prepared by Pym, December 3, 1641), "We are the representative body of the whole kingdom; your Lordships are but particular persons: if you do not pass the laws we think necessary, then this House with such of the Peers as are more sensible of the safety of the kingdom may join together and represent the same to his Majesty." In other words, the majority of the Commons can set aside any majority of the Peers. They have pronounced the declarations of the King illegal, and made their own imperative. They have the Tower for those who speak too warmly in defence of their Sovereign; they accord immunity and praise to his most envenomed aspersers; they refuse to put down the rebellion in Ireland, unless the Crown shall strip itself of those functions without which monarchy itself is a useless pageant; and they ascribe to their Sovereign the massacres he implores them to punish. At the time he has appeased the troubles in Scotland by lavish surrender of hereditary prerogatives, and re-enters London amidst demonstrations of joy, he is met by the Grand Remonstrance, and, without provocation on his part, returning loyalty is corrupted

into fresh disaffection. It would not be in human nature if Charles had not felt resentment. Nor could any suppositions more naturally present themselves to his mind than that these ringleaders had perverted the judgment of the people; and that some show of spirit might be effective where all conciliation had so signally failed. He had with him a powerful party in both Houses; that party must melt away if its members were to be intimidated with impunity, its opponents encouraged by licence. In this temper of mind he would pause naturally to ask if those whom the courtiers round him must have regarded as traitors had not laid themselves fairly open to the penalties of treason. Such suggestions, heated by the vehement counsels of his haughty consort, shaped themselves into action, and Charles unhappily resolved to change the patient dignity of a defensive position for the critical experiment of an aggressive policy. He fell into the snare which the framers of the Grand Remonstrance had laid for him. They had calculated that a measure so insultingly hostile would provoke the hasty temper of Charles into some outbreak which might be cited in vindication of the course that had called it forth; his moderate request that the Remonstrance should not be published till his answer was given furnished an additional reason for the publication; the defiance of his request would sting him into imprudence. Meanwhile the popular disorders which the Remonstrance excited, and its framers encouraged, could scarcely fail to rouse some action of sovereignty that would be doubtless obnoxious and probably feeble. Their most sanguine expectations were realised by Charles when he suddenly sent his Attorney-General to the House of Lords to enter an accusation against one of their order —Lord Kimbolton, and five Commoners—Hollis, Haselrig, Hampden, Pym, and Strode; and his Serjeant-at-Arms to the House of Commons to require of the Speaker the five gentlemen, Members of that House.

The whole of this proceeding is told by Mr. Forster with a stern minuteness and a dramatic force that must render his work a standard document to every diligent student of the time. We must refer the reader to his graphic recital of the steps taken by the Commons when the message reaches them; the order of the House (which might be prudential, but which Mr. Forster might have paused to remark was full as great a breach of the Constitution as Charles himself had committed in demanding the surrender of the impeached Members) that the Members for London should require of the chief magistrate and authorities of the City a military guard for the protection of the House;* the reply to the King, conveyed that night by Falkland, Culpeper, Stapleton, and Hotham; the scene in the Queen's apartment, when the Queen persuaded the King to go himself the next morning to the House of Commons to demand the five Members; and, suspending for the moment the demur we shall afterwards raise as to Mr. Forster's implication of Hyde and Falkland as privy and consenting to the King's rash attempt, we place before the reader Mr. Forster's account of that awful hour when Charles "went into that House of Commons where never King was (as they say) but once, King Henry the Eighth." The narrative has been often told, but never with so happy a combination of historic fidelity in detail and dramatic vivacity in description.

The House had adjourned for an hour, from twelve to one:—

"Momentous was the hour during which the House thus adjourned its sitting, for within that brief space all the King's intention was betrayed. Up to the time of the adjournment,

* In the fragments of Pym's speech for a guard upon the Houses at Westminster, it is curious to notice his characteristic propensity to press into solemn importance the shreds and scraps of frivolous gossip, with which he could never fail to be supplied by the system of espionage that furnished him and his associates with a Star Chamber of their own. "One Mr. Buckle had said the Earl of Strafford's death must be avenged, and the House of Commons were a company of giddy-brained fellows."

grave as were the causes of alarm, and the grounds for expecting some act of violence, the circumstance which gave its utmost gravity to the outrage contemplated does not appear to have been in any degree suspected even remotely. But now it was that Lady Carlisle managed to convey to Pym that the King meant to put himself at the head of those Whitehall desperadoes, and in person to demand, and if necessary seize, the accused members as they sat in their places in the House of Commons. D'Ewes tells us that, 'this day at dinner,' the five Members also received a secret communication of the King's intention from the Lord Chamberlain of the Household, Lord Essex, with advice that they should absent themselves."

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"The member for Banbury was still speaking when Pym, Hampden, Hollis, Haselrig, and Strode entered and took their seats, whereupon the Speaker directed it to be entered in the Journals that they had done so.

"Communication was now made to the House of the secret intelligence received, and then followed a debate, brief and pressing, but on which hung certain issues by which the future destinies of England were probably determined. Should the accused retire, or wait the King's arrival? Pym, Hollis, and Hampden, conscious of all the danger, appear to have been for quitting the House, Haselrig and Strode for remaining; and the dissentients were still urging reasons against retreat while yet, as they argued, no positive knowledge was before them of a necessity for abrupt departure, when a new actor came suddenly on the scene. Breathless with the exertion he had made to reach the House rapidly, to which end he had even clambered over the roofs of neighbouring buildings, there appeared at the door a friend of Nathaniel Fiennes, an officer of French birth settled in England, by name Captain Hercule Langres. Fiennes left his seat, exchanged some hasty words with the unexpected visitor, and immediately passed up to Mr. Speaker's chair: upon which Lenthal rose, and abruptly told the House, now a scene of extraordinary excitement, that the King already had left Whitehall at the head of a large company of armed men, and was approaching Westminster Hall.

"This closed debate. The motion before the House had been, That, considering there was an intention to remove five of their Members by force, to avoid all tumult let them be commanded to absent themselves: but the motion now substituted, and at once affirmed, was that the House give their Members leave to absent themselves, but enter no order for it. 'It was a question,' Haselrig afterwards said, 'if we should be gone; but the debate was shortened, and it was thought fit for us, in discretion, to withdraw. Away we went. The King immediately came in, and was in the House *before we got to the water.*' Not, however, until violence had been used. For, even then, Strode, 'crying

out that he knew himself to be innocent, and that he would stay in the House though he sealed his innocency with his blood at the door,' had to be dragged bodily out by his friend Sir Walter Earle, and placed in the barge which had been hastily provided, and was in waiting at the Westminster stairs."

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"Within the House, meanwhile, but a few minutes had elapsed since the Five Members departed, and Mr. Speaker had received instruction to sit still with the mace lying before him, when a loud knock threw open the door, a rush of armed men was heard, and above it (as we learn from Sir Ralph Verney) the voice of the King commanding 'upon their lives not to come in.' The moment after, followed only by his nephew Charles, the Prince Elector Palatine, Rupert's eldest brother, he entered; but the door was not permitted to be closed behind him. Visible now at the threshold, to all, were the officers and desperadoes above named, of whom, D'Ewes proceeds, 'some had left their cloaks in the Hall, and most of them were armed with pistols and swords, and they forcibly kept the door of the House of Commons open, one Captain Hide standing next the door holding his sword upright in the scabbard:' a picture which Sir Ralph Verney, also present that day in his place, completes by adding that 'so the doors were kept open, and the Earl of Roxborough stood within the door, leaning upon it.'

"As the King entered, all the members rose and uncovered, and the King also removed his hat; and it would not have been easy, says Rushworth, to discern any of the Five Members, had they been there, among so many bare faces standing up together. But there was One face, among the Five, which Charles knew too well not to have singled out even there; and hardly had he appeared within the chamber, when it was observed that his glance and his step were turned in the direction of Pym's seat close by the bar. His intention, baffled by the absence of the popular leader, can only now be guessed at; but, Rushworth adds, 'his Majesty, not seeing Mr. Pym there, knowing him well, went up to the chair.' We all, says D'Ewes, stood up and uncovered our heads, and the Speaker stood up just before his chair. 'His Majesty, as he came up along the House, came the most part of the way uncovered, also bowing to either side of the House, and we all bowed again towards him, and so he went to the Speaker's chair on the left hand of it, coming up close by the place where I sat, between the south end of the clerk's table and me.' As he approached the chair, Lenthal stepped out to meet him; upon which 'he first spake,' says D'Ewes, saying, 'Mr. Speaker, I must for a time make bold with your chair.' And then the King stepped up to his place and stood upon the step, but sat not down in the chair. And after he had looked a great while, he spoke again."

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"'Gentlemen,' said Charles, 'I am sorry for this occasion of coming unto you. Yesterday I sent a serjeant-at-arms upon a very important occasion to apprehend some that by my command were accused of high treason; whereunto I did expect obedience, and not a message. And I must declare unto you here, that, albeit no King that ever was in England shall be more careful of your privileges, to maintain them to the uttermost of his power, than I shall be, yet you must know that in cases of treason no person hath a privilege. And therefore I am come to know if any of these persons that were accused are here.'

"Then he paused; and casting his eyes upon all the members in the House, said, 'I do not see any of them. I think I should know them.'

"'For I must tell you, Gentlemen,' he resumed after another pause, 'that so long as those persons that I have accused (for no slight crime, but for treason) are here, I cannot expect that this House will be in the right way that I do heartily wish it. Therefore I am come to tell you that I must have them, wheresoever I find them.'

"Then again he hesitated, stopped: and called out, 'Is Mr. Pym here?' To which nobody gave answer.

"The awkwardness and effort manifest in these pauses and interruptions, the words that again and again recur, the needless and bald repetitions, in which we seem to hear the slow and laboured utterance with which Charles covered his natural impediment of speech, impress the imagination painfully.

"All the breaks and pauses, however, were omitted in the report directed to be published; and D'Ewes, surmising that not only such omissions had been made by the King's order, but also all mention of the reply given upon Charles's appeal to the Speaker, is careful to restore what was wanting. 'But the King caused all that to be left out, namely, when he asked for Mr. Pym, whether he were present or not, and when there followed a general silence, that nobody would answer him. He then asked for Mr. Hollis whether he were present, and, when nobody answered him, he pressed the Speaker to tell him, who, kneeling down, did very wisely desire his Majesty to pardon him, saying that he could neither see nor speak but by command of the House: to which the King answered, 'Well, well! 'tis no matter. I think my eyes are as good as another's.' And then he looked round about the House a pretty while, to see if he could espie any of them.' Very welcome are all such additional touches to a picture so memorable.

"'May it please your Majesty,' said Lenthal, to the appeal that he should say where Pym was (for, as Rushworth himself, when he published his *Collections*, inserted his own report of the discreet speech of Mr. Speaker, and as the good Sir Simonds, had he lived to see it, would certainly have copied it in his Journal, it will here be most properly appended to an account which first

gives to it all its significance), 'I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place, but as the House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here; and I humbly beg your Majesty's pardon that I cannot give any other answer than this to what your Majesty is pleased to demand of me.' Words conceived indeed with a singular prudence. Impressed deeply by the attitude of the House, and inspired suddenly by the trust confided to him, a man little famous for magnanimity or courage displayed both for the moment in a remarkable degree, and rose to the occasion as greatly as the King sank beneath it. But sorrow and suffering are wiser teachers than anger and revenge. There was yet to come a day in Charles's life, when he too would rise to the demand of the time; when his natural infirmities would be visible no longer; and when men should wonder to behold, in one so infirm of purpose and difficult of speech, both unembarrassed accents and a resolute will.

"After that long pause described by D'Ewes,—the dreadful silence, as one Member called it,—Charles spoke again to the crowd of mute and sullen faces. The complete failure of his scheme was now accomplished, and all its possible consequences, all the suspicions and retaliations to which it had laid him open, appear to have rushed upon his mind. 'Well, since I see all my birds are flown, I do expect from you that you will send them unto me as soon as they return hither. But, I assure you, on the word of a King, I never did intend any force, but shall proceed against them in a legal and fair way, for I never meant any other. And now, since I see I cannot do what I came for, I think this no unfit occasion to repeat what I have said formerly, that whatsoever I have done in favour, and to the good, of my subjects, I do mean to maintain it. I will trouble you no more, but tell you I do expect, as soon as they come to the House, you will send them to me; otherwise I must take my own course to find them.'"

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"But he did not leave, as he had entered, in silence. Low mutterings of fierce discontent broke out as he passed along, and 'many members cried out aloud, so as he might hear them, *Privilege! Privilege!*' With those words, ominous of ill, ringing in his ear, he repassed to his palace through the lane, again formed, of his armed adherents, and amid audible shouts of as evil augury from desperadoes disappointed of their prey. Eagerly in that lobby had the word been waited for, which must have been the prelude to a terrible scene. Lady Carlisle alone had prevented it."

Few readers will fail to be impressed by the skilled and disciplined power with which these passages are composed; the scene moves, the actors live.

We must now pause to notice two controversial points which have been urged by Mr. Forster with great vigour of diction and ingenuity of reasoning.

That in the mode of procedure against the Five Members Charles committed an outrage on the privileges of Parliament, and inflicted a violent shock upon public opinion, is a fact on which his warmest defenders must agree with his sternest accusers.

The first question that arises is one which was hotly debated at the time, and which Mr. Forster examines with great care—Did Charles intend to employ the armed men that accompanied him for the purpose of carrying off the accused Members by force, and at the risk of bloodshed? The King always asserted in his speeches and manifestoes that such was not his intention, that he came accompanied with even less than his ordinary guard. Against this statement Mr. Forster accumulates much presumptive evidence. But we still think the matter one that must remain in doubt. Even allowing the utmost force ascribed to the train that followed the King, it did not exceed 500 men; and supposing most of them were armed with pistols as well as the small swords usually worn at the time ("little swords" Clarendon calls them), such a force would have been very insufficient to have borne away, after a probable resistance, five popular idols through a fierce multitude habituated to assemble, and disregardful alike of the claims of prerogative and the forms of law. But out of this number only about four score, besides some of his pensioners, according to the authority on whom Mr. Forster most relies, entered the lobby of the House. The King commanded them not on their lives to enter in, and the only person who followed himself into the body of the House was his nephew, the Elector Palatine.

Had he then found the Members; had the scene which Mr. Forster assumes to have been anticipated by Charles actually ensued; had the accused refused

to yield themselves to his summons; had the majority of their fellow Members gathered round them to defend; had the guard been summoned in to seize the persons the King selected; had an armed conflict been waged on the narrow floors of the House—Charles himself would probably have been the first man slain in the affray.

We think it most likely that Charles had matured no comprehensive design; that with the sanguine temper which was habitual to him, and which is rarely accompanied with foresight, he trusted to the imposing effect that his train would produce on the way—to the awe that his own presence in the hall would inspire; believed that he should succeed, and did not carry his thoughts beyond that belief. In our common experience of life we see daily that the greatest hazards are incurred with the least calculation. It is only the man endowed largely with that "wisdom of business"—in which Charles was so lamentably deficient—who, in braving a perilous risk to which his impulse invites him, solves beforehand the problem contained in the question, "And if I succeed, what then?" Nor can we imagine that, if Charles had found the Members in their places, carried them off without armed collision, and actually lodged them in the Tower, the consequences would have been so fatal to freedom as Mr. Forster assumes. With the pitiful force at his command, Charles could no more have detained prisoners so illegally made than he could have saved Strafford, not less illegally condemned. With both Houses of Parliament against him; with the City, on whose loyalty he had so vainly built, in close league with the Commons; with the exasperated multitudes that had already infested the purlieus of his Court ripe for a revolt which would be rendered irresistible because strengthened by the sympathy of the middle class and sure of leaders from the upper, Charles could not have kept the Members in durance forty-eight hours. He had

decided on a course in which success every way was impossible—a course from which Falkland and Culpeper, whom he had just called into office, must, if consulted, have been the most strenuous in dissuasion: Falkland from that respect to the usages of Parliament which Clarendon emphatically ascribes to him; Culpeper from the quick sense which he concentered on the salient points of a debated case, and the military bluntness with which he was accustomed to speak out his rude free mind. In fact, the course taken by the King can only be accounted for by a profound study of his peculiar character, in which the predominance of hope made a large and dangerous attribute. It was this sanguine temperament that led him into his most notable miscalculations, and it was the more mischievous because accompanied by a persuasion of the efficacy of his own personal interposition, which had in it less of the arrogance of pride than the delusion of self-esteem. In contrast to Charles II., who, despite a harsh and homely visage, fascinated, where he so pleased, by the charm of manner,—Charles I., with a person and countenance that seen in the canvas of Vandyke command our admiring interest, failed to conciliate or impose on those whom he addressed. Mr. Hallam has remarked that "he had, in truth, none who loved him till his misfortunes softened his temper and excited sympathy." An ungracious and chilling manner, an imperfection of speech, a something about the living man which the painter has not transferred to the portrait, seem to have made him singularly unsuccessful wherever he relied on the effect of his presence. But of this he was insensible. His personal interposition ensured the destruction of Strafford, but he went out of his way to volunteer it. No less sanguinely he counted on his personal interposition in the hall of the House of Commons. A man who habitually hopes, and grounds his hope on something inherent in himself, can seldom be wise in design, or

fortunate in execution. A certain defiance of hope is necessary to the foresight which measures obstacles, and the precautions that ensure success. Charles believed that the City was with him, that the people were really with him, if certain deceivers of the people could be removed; just as he believed, when he set up his standard at Nottingham, that England would flock round it; that if he appeared before Hull, Hull would yield: thus he forgot the disasters of Naseby in the festivities of Ragland, and placed hope in those sure instruments of ruin—avowed understanding with English Papists, secret compact with Irish rebels; thus at a still more forlorn crisis of his fate he wrote to Digby, "that he did not despair of engaging either the Presbyterians or the Independents to join him for the extermination of each other; and then (said the sanguine dreamer, duped by the hope of duping a St. John and a Cromwell) "I shall really be King again;" thus, when guarded by Leven's sentinels in the Scottish camp, his answer to the Parliamentary propositions conveyed to him by Pembroke and Suffolk was a demand to be received in London to treat in person with his Parliament: confident, even then, in the effect of that Royal presence which had failed to restrain the conflicting jealousies of his own Oxford Council; and thus, not a month before he was borne from his palace to the judicial slaughter-house of Westminster-Hall, he said gaily, "I have yet three games to play, the least of which gives me hope of regaining all." It is credulity that misleads multitudes, and it is credulity that blinds rulers.

For the rash designs of a man of this temper, a very little encouragement from those who flatter his own hopes will suffice. We do not then agree with Mr. Forster that the King's attempt on the Members was part of a long-premeditated and deep-laid scheme for restoring arbitrary rule, though, no doubt, that idea seduced the fiery temper and shallow mind of

Henrietta; and still less can we subscribe to the arguments by which Mr. Forster seeks to implicate Hyde and Falkland as accessories or confidants in the impeachment of the Members or the attempts to arrest them.

We do not attach the weight Mr. Forster appears to do, to the fact that Clarendon, as well as Falkland and Culpeper, believed the accused to be really guilty of the treason alleged. Does Mr. Forster himself believe they were innocent? There can be no doubt that these gentlemen had been the principal movers and promoters in the levying an armed force without the King's authority and in defiance of it. We apprehend that there are many not illiberal politicians of our day who entertain little doubt that such an act amounts to what the ancient laws of the realm declare to be high treason. Certain at least it is that the Commons had much less ground for impeaching the twelve Bishops for high treason, because they protested against acts passed and votes taken in their constrained absence, than a lawyer, of Whig principles, could find in the accusations against the five Members, if judged only by their avowed acts and public speeches. We see, therefore, no ground for supposing that, because Clarendon, Falkland, and Culpeper thought the Members guilty, Clarendon commits a deliberate falsehood when he says that none of the three were privy to those proceedings against the members, which he condemns as impolitic, and laments as calamitous. Every day a lawyer gives his opinion that there is strong evidence in favour of a certain action, and adds his advice that, nevertheless, there are still stronger reasons why the action should not be brought. Clarendon is the author of the various Royal declarations in which the King is made to regret and apologise for the attempted arrest; and it is inconsistent with that pride of intellect which is Clarendon's characteristic, not only to state, in a history designed for posterity, that an

act of which he was secretly prevised was a disastrous error, but to place in the King's mouth expressions of regret for an act of which he himself was accomplice. There is still less cause, we think, to impute to Falkland and Culpeper connivance with or privity to the King's mistakes in the whole of this proceeding. They were both men of great personal and Parliamentary courage, and it does not seem credible that they, who as members of the King's Government were bound to defend his acts when consulted therein, should have remained silent on his behalf if they had been consulted; that Falkland should even have assented to be member and mouthpiece of the commissioners deputed by the House to represent to the King its sense of the outrage committed on its privileges. We therefore come to the conclusion that Clarendon's statement is correct in the main, and that Charles had no English adviser of political eminence in the proceedings against the accused members except the wayward and wrong-headed Digby.

In a very few sentences Clarendon seems to lay before us the exact faults of character by which Digby would give the counsel and Charles adopt it.

> "He (Lord Digby) was equal to a very good part in the greatest affair, but the unfittest man alive to conduct it, having an ambition and vanity superior to all his other parts, and a confidence peculiar to himself, which sometimes intoxicated, and transported, and exposed him. . . . . His fatal infirmity is, that he often thinks difficult things very easy, and doth not consider possible consequences.
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> "The King himself was the unfittest person alive to be served by such a counsellor, being too easily inclined to sudden enterprises, and as easily amazed when they were entered upon."

Mr. Forster has laid great stress upon the instructions sent through Sir Edward Nicholas to the Lord Mayor, the night previous to the King's descent on the House of Commons, and has brought into much fuller display than preceding historians have done

the consultations and preparations of that eventful night. But it does not appear to us that these preparations to guard against street tumults suffice to prove that even Sir Edward Nicholas was in the King's secret as to the intended arrest of the five Members. Nor can Charles justly be said to have exceeded the powers lodged with every Executive in his orders to disperse any mob by which the safety of the metropolis might be endangered; while Mr. Forster has omitted to state that the Commons had violated the Constitution, in not only setting aside Charles's authority over the Tower, but in sending to Lord Newport to desire him to take the custody of that stronghold.

Baffled alike in his visit to the House of Commons and his appeal to the Common Council of the City, humiliated by the angry shouts of the populace, the King retires from Whitehall to Hampton Court, and thence to Windsor.

One fact the failure of the King's attempt must have made evident to every calm-judging politician. The popular leaders had nothing further to fear from Charles so long as they did not expose their trustiest ramparts, in the privileges of Parliament and the favour of public opinion, to the hazards of Civil War. Charles had concentered and exhausted in this attempt at aggression all the resources at his command: the awe of his presence, the influence he could sway in the City, the garrison he could control at the Tower. But the whole force he could muster in the heart of his metropolis was a handful of roystering volunteers, ill armed and worse disciplined. The City repelled him. The Tower failed him. His best friends shrank from his side in consternation. The House of Lords declared against him as firmly as the House of Commons. Even the signal audacity of the eloquent Digby was paralysed, and he had not a word to say in excuse for the action he had prompted. Thus the

effort to regain authority by force had only served to make convincingly clear the weakness to which Royalty had become reduced when it moved in opposition to Law.

This was then the time in which a genuine statesman would have clearly seen that liberty could only be endangered if it descended from the vantage ground won in public opinion. The King was powerless against the law so long as peace could be preserved; he could not summon war to his aid so long as he could proclaim to the world no cause that adherents would fight for. He could no more have raised an army than he could have appeased a mob by the cry of "The Old Prerogative—Ship Money and Star Chamber!" The swords of his lealest peers would not have flashed from their scabbards—at least in his defence—had he renewed an attempt on the privileges of either House of Parliament. But if the Opposition abused the advantage they had gained in his recent defeat—if they made demands so extravagant that all who valued monarchy as an institution would approve the monarch who refused to concede them — then the whole question at issue would be at once changed; — then a war-cry more alarming than that of the "Old Prerogative" would be furnished to Charles. The loyalty estranged from the man would be restored to the institution of which he was the guardian; and patriots who loved freedom and had helped to win it might fairly prefer the cause of a monarchy limited by the reforms already achieved, to innovations at variance with the framework of the constitution, and the galling despotism of intolerant faction.

For these reasons we think the course adopted by the popular leaders after the failure of the King's attempt on the Five Members was precisely the reverse of that which was calculated to ensure to freedom and the nation the greatest certainty of good with the slightest hazard of evil.

At a time when their interest was so especially peace, every step they took was in the direction of war, and every demand they made shifted the issues at stake till the question became—not "what shall be the securities against a feeble King?" but "what shall be the safeguards for monarchy itself against the licentious republic of a Marten or the fanatical Utopia of a Vane?" Pym was at that moment pre-eminently the master of the position. He was at the height of unsurpassed popularity both with Parliament and the public. His influence extended from the minds that he commanded to those that he opposed, because in marching towards the objects of the one he had professed a certain degree of sympathy with the predilections of the other. Heading avowed Puritans and suspected levellers, he had hitherto retained the special character of a sincere, if moderate, churchman—a loyal, if dauntless, subject. He had but to recognise the prudence of magnanimity—to prove consistent to the character by which he had sought to distinguish his political ethics from those of the Root-and-branch men—in order to have consolidated the new Constitution in that form in which it now stands before us, saved alike from the pikemen of Cromwell and the Cabal of Charles II. Never had English citizen so grand an opportunity to achieve the renown which posterity accords to the man who guards order from shock, and liberty from reaction. He cast that opportunity from him. What he gained in exchange we trust to make clear before we end.

In vain are all the unhappy King's attempts to retract, apologise, and atone for his mistake—in vain he assents to the Bill by which Bishops are excluded from the House of Lords—in vain he offers to compromise his essential prerogative on the control over the Militia, agrees to nominate the persons recommended to him as lieutenants by commissions revocable at his pleasure, or make them irremoveable for

a year, provided they receive their orders from himself and the two Houses jointly—in vain Lord Bristol, whose high-spirited resistance to arbitrary rule had been so memorably evinced during the time when Charles was armed with the powers now wrenched from his grasp, endeavours to save the last remnants of monarchical government, and avert the horrors of fratricidal carnage. His motion to appoint "a Select Committee of both Houses, truly to state all the differences between the King and Parliament, with the most probable ways of reconciling them,—what the King ought to do to satisfy the people, and what security he should give,"—is met that day or the next by a vote of the Commons to the "effect that the King intended to make war against the Parliament; that whenever he did, it would be a breach of the trust reposed in him by his people; that whoever should serve and assist him in such wars would be a traitor by the fundamental laws of the kingdom;" and ten days afterwards (the 2nd of June) they send to Charles the famous Nineteen Propositions, on which "to establish a good peace, and strict union between the King and the Parliament." As these Propositions embody the political creed of the Pym party, in opposition to the constitutional patriots, of whom Falkland was the most illustrious; as to effect the substance of these Propositions the Grand Remonstrance was, in truth, put forth by its framers: so it is impossible to regard the end and aim of the Remonstrance, or accurately to discriminate between the Pym party and the associates of Hyde and Falkland, without a brief summary of these Propositions themselves.

They contain one salutary doctrine which posterity has preserved, and that doctrine Charles would have accepted as monarchy accepts it now, viz., "that the great affairs of the kingdom may not be concluded or decided by the advice of private men, or by any unknown and unsworn councillors; and that no

public act concerning the affairs of the kingdom which are proper for the Privy Council may be esteemed of any validity as proceeding from the Royal authority, unless it be done by the advice and consent of the major part of the Council, attested under their hands." This, however roughly worded, contains the substance of responsible parliamentary government, and Charles's reply to it contains not less the substance of that responsible parliamentary government as now established. He says :*—

"We have and do assure you that there is no man so near to us in place or affection whom we will not leave to the justice of the law, if you shall bring a particular charge and sufficient proofs against him; and we have given you (the best pledge of the effects of such a promise on our part, and the best security for the performance of their duty on theirs) a Triennial Parliament, the apprehension of whose justice will, in all probability, make them wary how they provoke it, and us wary how we choose such as by the discovery of their faults may in any degree seem to discredit our election."

And, indeed, the whole theory of the existing constitution and the due solution of the problems of ministerial government, as appointed by the Crown, but checked by and amenable to the people through their representatives, by which is now worked the machinery of the State, are advanced and enforced by Charles in his answer to the Nineteen Propositions, with as much precision as any liberal constitutional lawyer of our time could deliver them :—

"There being three kinds of government—absolute monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy—and all these having their particular conveniences and inconveniences, the experience and wisdom of your ancestors hath so moulded them out of a mixture of these as to give to this kingdom, as far as human prudence can provide, the conveniences of all three without the inconvenience of any one. . . . .

"In this kingdom the laws are jointly made by a king, by a House of Peers, and by a House of Commons chosen by the people, all having free votes and particular privileges. The government,

* Rushworth, p. 3, vol. i. p. 725.

according to these laws, is trusted to the king; power of treaties of war and peace, of making peers, of choosing officers and councillors for state, judges for law, commanders for forts and castles, giving commissions for raising men; to make war abroad, or to prevent and provide against invasions or insurrections at home; benefits of confiscation, power of pardoning, and some more of the like kind are placed in the king; and this kind of regulated monarchy, having this power to preserve that authority, without which it would be disabled to preserve the laws in their force, and the subjects in their liberties and properties, is intended to draw to him such a respect and relation from the great ones as may hinder the ills of division and faction, and such a fear and reverence from the people as may hinder tumults, violence, and licentiousness. Again, that the prince may not make use of this high and perpetual power to the hurt of those for whose good he hath it, and make use of the name of public necessity for the gain of his private favourites and followers to the detriment of his people,—the House of Commons, an excellent conserver of liberty, but never intended for any share in government, or the choosing of them that should govern, is solely intrusted with the first propositions concerning the levies of moneys (which is the sinew as well of peace as of war), and the impeaching of those who for their own ends, though countenanced by any surreptitiously-gotten command of the king, have violated that law which he is bound, when he knows it, to protect, and to the prosecution of which they were bound to advise him, at least not to serve him in the contrary. And the Lords, being trusted with a judicatory power, are an excellent screen and bank between the prince and people to assist each against any encroachments of the other, and by joint judgment to preserve that law which ought to be the rule of every one of the three."

This is the constitution of England. It is here expressed by Hyde, in language that conveys his and Lord Falkland's manifesto of political faith in contrast to that which Pym and his party set forth in the Nineteen Propositions and heralded in the Grand Remonstrance.

What was the constitution prepared by the Nineteen Propositions taken as a whole? That the Parliament consisted not of King, Lords, and Commons, but of Lords and Commons alone. That the Parliament thus defined and shorn of its third member should in substance make the appointments under the Crown, to which was left only the mock prerogative of enforced assent; that if a vacancy in the Council

occurred in the interval of Parliament, the assent of the majority of the Council should be necessary to filling up the place, the choice to be confirmed or void as Parliament, when it reassembled, might decide. That the government, education, and marriages of the King's children should be taken from his hands and given only to those whom Parliament might approve. That the children of Papists should be educated by Protestants in the Protestant faith. That the church government and liturgy should be reformed as both Houses might advise. That the service of the militia and the command and custody of all forts and castles should be in the hands of Parliament, the King being compelled to appoint those whom Parliament should name. That no peer, made hereafter, should sit in Parliament but with the consent of both Houses. This, with the reserved addition of a law to deprive the Crown altogether of its right of veto, which, though not included in the Nineteen Propositions, was sure to be tacked to them if they were conceded, since its principle had been already affirmed by a majority of the Commons—this was the constitution proposed by the Pym party; for the sake of this constitution they refused all compromise, and exposed to the issue of battle all the reforms hitherto effected in conjunction with Hyde and Falkland; and, when Mr. Forster would represent the Pym party as having secured to us by their firmness or pertinacity the blessings we now enjoy, we answer that this is the constitution which perished with the men who conceived it; while that which Hyde describes and for which Falkland fell survives in all the vigour which Pym could have given to it without bloodshed—had not Pym made himself the pioneer to Cromwell.

We here pause, for a moment, to glance at the view of Lord Falkland's character and choice of action, with which Mr. Forster has enriched the last edition of his work on the Grand Remonstrance. It

would be surprising, indeed, if a writer like Mr. Forster, whose tastes had been evinced in criticisms admirable for delicate appreciation of beauty, and whose sympathies of man and of scholar are too large and too genial to be cramped within the parish-bounds of Party—did not bow to the charm with which the image of Falkland fascinates every purer eye. In that conflict of giants, each passion, each interest, finds its representative and type. Honour and Genius elect Falkland as their own. With warmth noble in an adversary, and in diction worthy of a critic, Mr. Forster renders eloquent justice to "those prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, that flowing and obliging humanity and goodness to mankind, that primitive simplicity and integrity of life." . . . . But Mr. Forster, while thus just to Falkland's character, appears to us wholly to misconceive those motives of conduct which were not only consistent with, but inherently elemental to, the character itself.

Mr. Forster says, "He (Falkland) is generally assumed to have been the incarnation of moderate and temperate counsels—that he is the man of all others of our civil conflict who is most generally supposed to have represented therein the monarchical principle. . . . But the real truth is that Falkland was far more of an apostate than Strafford, for his heart was really with the Parliament from the first, which Strafford's never was, and never to the end did he sincerely embrace the cause with which his gallant and mournful death has eternally connected him." These assumptions are not merely inconsistent with, but directly antagonistic to, that pervading attribute of Falkland's character, which Mr. Forster in a subsequent passage states with emphatic candour, viz., "that so severely did he adore truth that he could as easily have given himself to steal as to dissemble." We think that Mr. Forster in the judg-

ment he pronounces confounds two things essentially different, and ascribes to want of sympathy with a cause, that rectitude of judgment which has no sympathy with supporters by whose intemperance the cause is injured. That which pre-eminently distinguished Falkland amongst the actors of his time was his passion for justice. He was thus naturally the champion of the weak; he could not endure the sight of oppression. And by a consistency of character which bears down all the petty inconsistencies in detail from which no man of ardent temperament is free, the same tendencies that made him oppose Charles when powerful and oppressive—attracted him to Charles when feeble and oppressed.

Falkland, no doubt, from the first to the last, was a lover of Liberty; but of Liberty as her image would present itself to the mind of a scholar and the heart of a gentleman. It is no proof of apostacy from the cause of Liberty if he thought that a time had come when Liberty was safer on the whole with King Charles than with "King Pym."

Though he had taken an active part in the attainder of Strafford, it is probable that the circumstances connected with the execution of that formidable minister produced on his mind the same reaction which Mr. Forster has observed it had produced in a large section of the public, "when the King, to all appearances, was now the weaker party, and the popular leaders became conscious of daily defection from their ranks." When Falkland looked back to the trial and fall of Strafford, he, "who denounced ever with vehement indignation the liberty of opening private letters upon suspicion that they might contain matter of dangerous consequence," must have felt morally shocked that it was by the purloining of a paper still more sacred than a private letter, and by Pym's adroit management of Vane's deliberate breach of honour, that Strafford had been cheated to the block.

Falkland abhorred the employment of spies: "he could account no single preservation to be worth so general a wound and corruption of human society as the cherishing such persons would carry with it." But Pym's policy was one webwork of espionage from the Countess of Carlisle to the tailor walking in the field. Even Hampden must have lost the confidence of Falkland when he accepted the commission to be a spy upon his King. Thus, in the man's nature, the same instincts that roused him against the Star Chamber of Charles would estrange him from the councils of Pym.

And his instincts were in strict accordance with all we can fairly assume as his political creed. Every Reformer, with a mind so cultured as Falkland's, places before him some definite goal beyond which he declines to be hurried away. The objects Falkland desired to attain were Monarchy divested of all pretensions to absolutism, and a Church purified from all sympathies with papacy and excluded from all penal jurisdiction in civil affairs: in fine, a Monarchy without a Strafford, and a Church without a Laud. These objects attained, Falkland's goal was reached --he stopped; Pym went on. It is not apostacy to stop at a good attained, because associates that had helped to attain it advance towards the risks in which the good may be lost. When, after carrying his Reform Bill with the aid of Mr. Hume, Lord Grey refused to proceed to other Reform Bills to which Mr. Hume invited him, was Lord Grey an apostate? Or, if Pym had survived to gaze aghast on the Revolution he had headed rushing on to extravagances which Falkland's more provident reason foresaw, would Pym have been an apostate if he too had stopped short, and clung to whatever was left of the constitution of England, rather than march with Sidney towards a Republic, half Platonic, half Pythagorean, or inaugurate with Harrison a government for the Millennium under the reign of Saints?

Falkland, it is true, had no personal enthusiasm for Charles; he had, it is true, no sympathy with the Digbys and the Jermyns; he had nothing more in common with the Ultra-Royalists than Pym would have had with the Fifth-Monarchy Men.

But we have not the smallest doubt that—with "all his doubts and self-questionings," all his apprehensions of evil whichever side might prevail for a time, —his conviction of the enduring superiority of the abstract principle which obtained his preference was sincere and profound, and that amidst his prophetic sorrow he never repented the choice he had made. Falkland's claim to wisdom is indeed the greater if, unblinded to the faults of the perishable monarch, he entwined his name with all that has since adorned and embellished freedom under that constitutional monarchy for which Pym would have substituted the "Nineteen Propositions." Moderation has its creed as well as fanaticism, and there are moments when it may equally need its martyrs. With all his gifts, Falkland, doubtless, wanted that which is often mistaken for conviction, viz., that mysterious faculty of will which, less the attribute of conviction than of imperious egotism, forces a kind of tyranny upon others, and so often gives to the men of action authority over the men of thought. In our intercourse with life we constantly see some man to whom we concede no special honesty, no paramount intellect, no superior knowledge, but who establishes a moral despotism in the circles in which he moves. This faculty is distinct from the mere power of intellect, with which it may or may not be combined. Napoleon I. had it—so had George III. With this gift Pym was unquestionably endowed to a sovereign degree. By it he stamped, as it were, the likeness of his own mind upon the Parliament and upon the public; by it he consolidated into singleness of action a party in itself heterogeneous and discordant; subjugating to his lead a Vane and a Hampden, as well

as a Haselrig and a Strode; so that while he lived there was no law in England so potent as the will of Pym.

On the other hand, this gift wholly failed to the finer intellect of Falkland. He could not exercise control even over Hyde, who revered his virtues with so admiring a love; he could not mould to his counsels even Charles, to whose cause his accession gave the dignity of patriotism and offered a guarantee for justice. And unhappily Charles was one with whom advice had weight in proportion as singleness of will overbore his own vacillation of purpose. It was idle to argue with him, for no casusist in his realm could argue more subtly than himself; but something of that timidity often noticeable in men, otherwise obstinate, who are by constitution both irritable and shy, made him more ductile to the confidant, who said roughly, "Do," than to the adviser who roused his talent for controversy, and gave him an excuse for his characteristic and often conscientious irresolution, in placing before his hopes and his fears the various reasons why a thing should be done. It was thus that he had been controlled by councillors immeasurably inferior to himself in understanding: Laud, whose heated decisiveness was proportional to the narrowness of his scope, as a flame warms with but little fuel, if it burns up through contracted flues; Buckingham, in whose half-insolent, half-familiar domineering, the rich vitality of animal spirits gave force of character to levity of mind. And if the night before the attempted arrest of the Five Members Charles had summoned a council of all the sages in his kingdom, he would have found plausible replies to their dissuasive reasonings, though he had not a word to say to Henrietta's absolute command, "*Allez, poltron*, and pull out those rogues by the ears."

Unquestionably, therefore, Falkland had to undergo severe disappointments, bitter mortifications, from the hour he entered the King's service to the day of

his death. In the council at Oxford his advice, which would have saved Charles, was constantly overruled by advisers who lured Charles on to destruction. A man less sincere in his conviction that his choice, nevertheless, was right—a man more swayed by vanity or self-interest—would have resigned in disgust a post in which he was condemned to incur many responsibilities for decisions which he had opposed in vain. Chafed by similar mortifications the Earls of Bedford, Holland, and Clare, though they fought with the King at Newbury, abandoned his cause and returned to Parliament, expressing their repentance for an interval of loyalty which had been so ungraciously welcomed. The fear of similar mortifications retained from the King's council-board the prudent Northumberland, and chilled back the secret inclinations of the popular Essex.

But Falkland had attached himself to a principle, and not to a man—to a principle that—inseparably interwoven with the woof not only of our civil laws, but of our social habits—could not fail, at last, to reconcile royalty and freedom. And when sadly persuaded that he could, in his own generation, serve that cause no longer by his life, he rendered to it what, under such circumstances, is the noblest and most lasting service man can render to the cause he adopts—the example of a glorious death. The principle itself with which it is truly said "his death eternally connected him," has survived to vindicate the farsighted sagacity of his choice; travelling on through the storms which obscured it in those days to illumine the atmosphere we breathe in our own, as light, though it pass through the winds, is not moved from its course by their rage.

The conclusions which we draw from our survey of Lord Falkland's character and conduct appear to us to bring into clearer light the one great mistake which pervaded the politics of the Pym party, and still more or less distorts the judgment of their

historical panegyrists. The mistake we mean is this; Pym and his more peculiar associates professed devoted attachment to the abstract principle of monarchy; yet they so contrived their opposition to the one monarch they distrusted, as to destroy the rights and safeguards indispensable to the permanent conservation of the principle of monarchy itself. If they were sincere in their attachment to monarchy, but persuaded that constitutional freedom was rendered hopelessly unsafe by the duplicity of Charles, or the rashness of his advisers, then it would surely have been well to concentrate their policy on a change of King rather than on a system of securities which altered the whole framework of government, debased the Crown into the mockery of "a gilded sign," and corrupted the virtue of the representative body by enriching the greed of faction with all the patronage that belongs to an executive. A change of King instead of a complete reversal of the relations between King and people, incompatible with prolonged existence of monarchy, would have been comparatively easy, since few persons had interest in keeping Charles on his throne, while all reasonable men had an interest in preferring English monarchy, with the checks already imposed on it, to the uncemented composite of a Dutch aristocracy and a Venetian Doge. For a change of King there was a precedent in the case of Richard II.; that precedent was afterwards applied to the case of James II. Such a solution of difficulties was not ignored in the mind of Pym's contemporaries: for the Elector Palatine hoped, if he did not actually intrigue, for the throne which Charles's deposition would vacate; and Charles himself, in the course of the struggle, meditated the offer of abdication in favour of his son.

We do not say that a change in the occupancy of the throne was in itself called for or expedient. On the contrary, we are firmly persuaded that a practical reconciliation between Charles and his Parliament,

with all adequate securities against the restoration of arbitrary rule, would have been easily effected after Charles's return from Scotland, had Pym and Hampden combined for that object with Hyde and Falkland; and we agree with Mr. Hallam that "of the various consequences which we may picture to ourselves from a pacification — (Mr. Hallam here refers to a date subsequent to the outbreak of the war, but his remark applies with far greater force to the date immediately preceding the Grand Remonstrance) —that which appears the least likely is that Charles should have re-established that arbitrary power which he had exercised in the earlier period of his reign."

We do not say, therefore, that Charles's abdication was necessary to freedom; but we do say that, of the two, a change of sovereign would have been far easier to accomplish, and far more consistent with Pym's professed attachment to monarchy, than a change which struck royalty out of the Three Component Parts of Parliament, reduced its uses to the pageantry of *les Rois Fainéants*, and armed with its power the House of Commons as its *Maire du Palais*.

In the apology for himself that he sent forth not long before his death, Pym solemnly says, "I neither directly nor indirectly ever had a thought tending to the least disobedience or disloyalty to his Majesty, whom I acknowledge my lawful King and Sovereign, and would expend my blood as soon in his service as any subject he hath." * If this were, indeed, his political creed, Pym might at least have given his aid to the counsels of that King for whom he would so cheerfully have shed his blood. But though denouncing Charles's advisers as the cause of all the evils, alleged or invented, Pym refused to become Charles's constitutional adviser. Before Falkland and Culpeper accepted office, the King renewed

* Rushworth, p. 3, vol. ii. p. 378: 'A Declaration and Vindication of John Pym, Esq.'

negotiations with Pym. Mr. Forster lauds Pym for rejecting them. To us such rejection on the part of a citizen so responsible to his country seems unfair to any King, unless predetermined that that King shall be dethroned. In short, we cannot but think that the course which became Pym and the friends who recognised with him Charles as their lawful Sovereign was to accept office, as the very security against other advisers which the issues of fratricidal war were risked to effect, and to insist on the condition which Hyde and Falkland would have cordially supported, viz. that the King should henceforth do nothing without consulting the official advisers he selected.

We dismiss as a chimera, based upon no evidence, a surmise of Mr. Hallam's, that the popular leaders meant only to curb the royal authority during Charles's life, with a view of extending it afterwards to just limits in the reign of his son. Pym and Hampden were too acute reasoners not to know, that a prerogative limited in one reign could not be re-expanded in the next without a new revolution. Nor can we conceive a more dangerous and precarious state for the realm, than a suspension of the supreme authority, with a view to its restitution in a successor —a suspension that would feed all the intrigues of faction, and be fatal to the fixity that belongs to order.

These considerations open to our view another capital fault in Pym and his partisans, for the consequences of which they are justly chargeable. With all the sagacity and prevision ascribed to them, they made no attempt to construct any tolerable form of government. Implacable to destroy, they were negligent beyond conception in the duty to rebuild. We should blame them far less if, like Marten, and probably the younger Vane, they had conceived the idea of a republic as the best form of government; and had then sought to lay for such a Commonwealth

sound and durable foundations. But their sole notion of good government seemed to be that of an irresponsible tyranny which armed a House of Commons—dissolvable only by its own consent—with powers limitable only by its own pleasure. In estimating the practical wisdom of Pym and his party, we cannot too carefully remember that, whatever they might allege against Charles, they never contended that he had forfeited the crown by the faults laid to his charge; and therefore the true question at issue extends far beyond that so warmly discussed between his accusers and defenders,—the question being not whether an individual king has or has not by his acts or designs justly forfeited his crown, but whether the English nation should forfeit those safeguards against turbulent faction which are found in the prerogatives conceded to a constitutional monarchy? and whether the innovations demanded by Pym and his party could either have improved the conditions of such a monarchy or established a better form of government? The moment these politicians presented to the choice of their own age and to the judgment of posterity their own scheme of a Constitution for England in the Nineteen Propositions, this became the true question as between a Pym and a Falkland, "Was that scheme of a Constitution such as any sound political reasoner would prefer to the Constitution it was intended to replace?" We venture to say that no practical politician, whether his theory favour republican or monarchical government, can deliberately examine the Nineteen Propositions without arriving at the conclusion that a worse Constitution the Abbé de Sièyes himself could not have taken from the pigeon-holes of his bureau. It is clear that, if the Crown had, as proposed, been deprived of all control over the military forces, all choice in civil appointments, all veto in the enactment of laws, all legal existence as a third branch of the Legislature; the House of Commons, having the

exclusive control of the finances, must have rapidly monopolised every attribute of executive power; and the struggle for the enjoyment of that power would have been waged between the factions in that House, not, as now, simply by the weapons of eloquence and argument, but with the command of the troops, the forts, and the prisons, which the dominant faction would have brought to bear on its opponents. The Constitution, therefore, proposed by Pym would have entailed on the nation every conceivable evil by which the animosities of faction culminate in a Reign of Terror. Nor are these deductions from the political theories advanced by Pym in the Constitution embodied in the Nineteen Propositions, unwarranted by the short-lived adoption of the theories themselves, viz. the absolute government of a House of Commons incorporating legislative functions with executive authority. To all liberty of thought and conscience it became as inimical as the despotism it overthrew: it soon lost even its own independence, "sinking (says Hallam) in its decrepitude and amidst public contempt beneath a usurper it had blindly elevated to power." A House of Commons, in fact, that assumes to command the army, must always end in giving the army command over its own destinies. The day on which Pym first took from the senseless brain of Haselrig to his own scheming intellect the question of the militia, was the parent of that day when Cromwell's pikemen removed the "bauble." We blame, therefore, Pym and his party for the course they adopted from the date of the Grand Remonstrance to the outbreak of the Civil War, as one that, whether they desired, as they professed, only securities for Constitutional monarchy, or aimed at a Republican form of government, was equally disastrous to either object; and by which all the substantial reforms that the party of Hyde and Falkland had mainly assisted them to obtain were gravely imperilled, nay, for more than a generation and a half

were practically annulled, whether by the usurpation of Cromwell or the reaction to which the Stuarts were indebted for their restoration. And though, as against Charles I., the Parliamentary side of the contest was triumphant, yet the chances to the contrary were sufficiently grave at the onset to have made every rational patriot shun the policy which necessitated an appeal to arms.

And the triumph itself, how costly, how sullied, how brief! converted into loss by its own final achievements, reuniting England to Monarchy by the execution of Charles, and to the Episcopal Church by the execution of Laud.

The warnings that posterity receives from the historical tragedy of those times, impartial philosophy may, perhaps, rather direct to the guidance of popular factions than to the correction of erring kings; for the faults of Charles were partly those of temporary and unusual circumstance, principally those of individual character. And little more could be applied from the lessons of his fate to assist the policy of princes in relation to popular demands, than the necessity of manly and upright sincerity in all concessions made, in all promises pledged. Suspicions are bred from the atmosphere of civil discord, and the frankest openness is the best prudence of kings, when their actions are spied and their powers enfeebled.

But to popular factions the warnings are of application universal and enduring. For we apprehend that the true key to what seems to us obscure or inconsistent in the policy of Pym and his party is to be found in motives of conduct as common now as they were two hundred and twenty years ago. It is a frequent mistake with speculative historians to ascribe to political parties deep and long-laid designs, of which political parties are in substance incapable. Elaborate strategy, sagacious foresight, profound plans veiled by systematic dissimulation, can never be the

characteristic of large parliamentary combinations, nor consequently of their recognised leaders, who but represent and obey the opinions and the passions that shift and vary with the variations and shifts of opponents unstable in purpose as themselves. We do not think, therefore, that Pym and his associates formed for themselves any settled design, either for the abolition of monarchy or for some wise and orderly system of government compatible with the powers they would have transferred from the monarchy to the House of Commons. They were doubtless more united, and more consciously working to defined ends, in theological doctrine than political creed; and becoming bolder and more determined in these, as Episcopacy had been made generally unpopular by the error of Charles in giving to a prelate of Laud's harsh temper and impolitic judgment a jurisdiction in secular matters, they aimed, long before they openly declared their intention, at the entire overthrow of the English hierarchy and the adoption of a Presbyterian Church, with the relentless persecution of Papists. Yet even in this Pym himself was overruled by the men he led, and borne away by the passions he had raised.

As to civil forms of government, we believe the Pym party acted much as "the advanced Liberals" of our day act now—in a sort of loose concert for the advance of what seemed to them popular principle, without any definite consideration how that principle, thus advanced, could practically harmonize with the monarchy on which it encroached more and more. "Did not craving (asks South) still grow upon granting, till nothing remained to be asked on one side or given on the other but the life of the giver?" In those days there would have been the same thought which shapes itself into cant phrases in our own—"Progressive policy;" "Advances in the right direction." And, just as now there is in our House of Commons a party that professes the utmost

loyalty to the throne, and is really innocent of any design to establish a republic, but is always ready to vote away the delicate props of monarchy, and increase the democratic influences which result either in republics or the military despotism by which in old states the fears of property rudely overthrow the commonwealths of dreamers; just as now there are men who would call it "Progressive policy," and "Steps in the right direction," to place the army at the control of the House of Commons, to reduce the jurisdiction of the House of Lords to a formula, to substitute the Voluntary Principle for the Established Church, to banish from the action of the Constitution all aristocratic intermixtures; and if these were granted, would then, rather than stand still, and on the mere principle of moving somehow or somewhere, proceed step by step to measures not as yet in their contemplation, till the old Constitution was wholly gone, and a new Constitution still a "progressive step;"—so we cannot see in the policy of Pym and his partisans anything beyond the feverish movement of a popular faction, outbidding and denouncing all temperate reformers, and blindly drifting on to that vague "something more" which ruins the substance of free nations, as it does the fortune of insatiate speculators. For there is a political as well as a pecuniary covetousness, and, in one as in the other, the hazards that spring from the greed of acquisition ruin the adventurers who never know where to stop.

Could Pym have lived to see the sentinels at Cromwell's gate, would he have admired the inevitable result of "steps in the right direction"? Could he rise from his grave to-morrow, and look around at this established monarchy, with rights fenced from his demands, with a Church triumphant over the Calvinists, and tolerant alike of Papist and Puritan, would he not say—"Degenerate race! How have you profited by the Grand Remonstrance? Where is the constitution set forth in the Nineteen Propositions?"

But could Falkland look from his repose on England as England is now, would not Falkland say, "This is what I sought to make my country! This is the throne which I would have reconciled to Parliamentary freedom; this is the Church that I would have purified from ecclesiastical domination over secular affairs and intolerant persecution of rival sects. To make an England such as I see now, I opposed the framers of the Grand Remonstrance and the Nineteen Propositions; and England as seen now is the vindication of my policy and the refutation of Pym's"?

We thus take leave of the subject which Mr. Forster's able works have brought before us; differing essentially from him in the views to which the events he commemorates have led us, but heartily commending to a perusal, qualified by the considerations herein suggested, the important additions he has made to our historical literature. His talents have adorned the cause he advocates; he must pardon us if we believe that, the fuller the light he throws on the facts and the parties which those talents illustrate, the wider will become the circle of reflective men who, in admitting their obligations to his research, will concur in our dissent from his conclusions.

# THE LIFE OF SCHILLER.

## A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

Originally prefixed to a Translation of SCHILLER'S POEMS AND BALLADS, published in 1847.

# LIFE OF SCHILLER.

## CHAPTER I.

### FIRST PERIOD.

Schiller's boyhood — His parentage — Early studiesand inclinations — His entrance at the Military Academy — His youthful poems, and predilections for the drama.

CLOSE by the village of Lorch, on the borders of Würtemberg, rise the ruins of a castle, the hereditary seat of the Counts of Hohenstaufen. The graves of that illustrious family surround a convent, placed upon a neighbouring eminence, and half hid by venerable limes. Upon another hill, stands an old chapel; below, flows the river Rems, through luxuriant vineyards, and fertile corn-fields. Amidst the ruins of Hohenstaufen, or amidst the graves of its ancient lords, between the years 1765-68, might often be seen two children—a boy and girl,—so strongly resembling each other, as to denote their relationship as brother and sister.* Usually they were seen alone; sometimes with young companions, —sometimes with a man in a military uniform, and in the vigour of life—to whom the boy, especially, listened with avidity, whether he explained the plan upon which the old Castle had been built, or pleased the infant spirit of adventure, by anecdotes of camp and field.† More often, perhaps, their companion was a female, of mild exterior, and manners pecu-

* Hoffmeister, Schwab.

† Hoffmeister.

liarly gentle, though somewhat grave and serious. And she, too, found in the children, still more especially in the boy, eager listeners to the talk by which she sought to instruct the understanding, or arouse the fancy. She had tales of witch and fairy to relate;—but, as the children grew older, she preferred rather to please their imagination with verses from Klopstock, Gerhard, and the pious Gellert. More than all—she at once charmed and instructed her young pupils by stories and passages from the Gospel, adapted to their understanding; and their tears flowed betimes at the sufferings of the Redeemer.* Already, perhaps, the scenes which he loved to haunt, and certainly the subjects he was accustomed to hear, had produced strong and deep impressions upon the mind and character of the boy. Already he had conceived a passion for Nature—formed habits of reverie and reflection—and looked forward to the ecclesiastic profession, for which his parents designed him, with a religious and earnest enthusiasm. At eight years old, alone in the woodlands, with a boy about his own age, he exclaimed, "O Karl, how beautiful is it here! All—all could I give, so that I might not miss this joy!"† His very sports partook of his serious character: nothing pleased him more than, by the help of a cap and a black apron, to assume the attire of the priest, mount a stool, and deliver extemporaneous and fervent homilies to an audience consisting of his mother and sisters. From his earliest childhood he was ever delighted to leave his infant games, to join the prayers or Bible lectures of the pious family to which he belonged; and his favourite sister has left a pleasing description of the child at such moments—with his folded hands, his blue eyes raised to Heaven, and the fair hair clustering over the broad forehead which he inherited from his mother. But though from infancy unusually serious, and from

* Hoffmeister, Schwab. † Hoffmeister, Schwab.

infancy, also, impatient of restraint, his temper was sweet, and his disposition full of tenderness and compassion. If he met a poor child in his way to school, he would bestow on him all he had; even his books —his clothes were not sacred from the impulse of his compassion. With all this softness of heart—this love of solitude, and this pious temperament, there was no less manifest a resolute and determined spirit. He was peculiarly fond of reading Voyages and books of Travels; and the Histories of popular heroes, such as Alexander the Great. He would often exclaim, "I must go into the world!" His reveries were, in short, those that denote not an indolent temper, but an active mind. His musings were not merely day-dreams—they were animated by that zeal for inquiry which usually foretells, in childhood, the career of men destined to think boldly, and love truth. In his seventh year, one evening, during a storm of thunder and lightning, the boy was missed at supper; he was found at last at the top of a tall lime-tree, near the house, enjoying the tempest; and, to quote his own apology, "wishing to see where so much fire in the heavens came from!" *—Such in childhood was the character of Johann Christoph Friedrich Schiller.

His birth placed him in that condition, between wealth and penury—(a condition bordering two classes—the Popular and the Refined), which is perhaps the most favourable to intellectual eminence.

His father, Johann Caspar Schiller, was of humble extraction, the son of a baker, who held the office of Bailiff in the village of Bittenfeld.† He was a man of an adventurous and restless character; stern and severe indeed in manners, but warmly attached to his family, of good abilities, of exemplary probity, and a strong and fervent sense of religion. He had held the rank of Surgeon in a Bavarian regiment. In 1749, a year after the peace of Aix-la-

* To this anecdote Schwab gives the weight of his authority.
† Schwab.

Chapelle, he married Elizabeth Dorothea Kodweiss, a young woman, born at Marbach (about eight miles from Stuttgard), of parentage suitable to his own; though it is said that her more distant descent could be traced to the noble house of Kottwitz.*

After his marriage, Caspar Schiller resigned the medical profession; but at the breaking out of the Seven Years' War in 1757, entered the Würtemberg army as ensign and adjutant. It was not till after some years that their union was blessed by children: Elizabeth, the eldest daughter, born 1757; Johann Christoph Friedrich, the poet, born at Marbach, Nov. 11, 1759; † Dorothea Louise, born two years afterwards; and Nannette, the youngest.‡

When Friedrich Schiller was six years old, his father, then risen to the rank of captain, was sent to Lorch as recruiting officer. Here the boy received the first regular rudiments of education, including Latin, and something even of Greek, from the clergyman of the parish, Philip Moser; whose name and virtues he afterwards immortalised in 'The Robbers.' His favourite companions were, his eldest sister, and the son of his tutor, Karl Moser. But no observation is at once more true and more hackneyed than that it is to the easy lessons of a mother, men of genius have usually owed their earliest inspiration. Schiller's mother had tastes and acquirements rare in women of her rank: she was a good musician—fond of poetry, and even wrote it; and the gentleness of her temper gave a certain refinement to her manners.

Friedrich Schiller was nine years old when his father was removed by the Grand Duke to
1768. Ludwigsburg, and the boy was entered at the public school instituted at that place. The academical discipline revolted one who had already formed his own desultory modes of self-instruction, and his in-

* Kattwitz, according to Hoffmeister—corrected by Schwab to Kottwitz.
† "A few months later than our own Robert Burns."—*Carlyle.*
‡ Two other children died soon after birth.

dustry was reluctant and constrained. Still he passed his examinations with credit; was ever one of the first in the Latin class to which he belonged, and received marks of approbation in the four several examinations he underwent before the School Commissioners, at Stuttgard. His character betrayed itself rather with his playfellows than his preceptors. He obtained an ascendency over them; and his high spirit would brave those older and stronger than himself, if he suspected any intention to affront him. With his superiors he was reserved and awkward. But what, at this time, chiefly influenced his future fate, was the sight of the theatre at Ludwigsburg—the remembrance of that spectacle, which, according to the fashion of the day, seems to have been a gorgeous spectacle, half opera half melodrame, began to colour all his thoughts, and dictate the character of his sports in the hours of play. At the 1770.
age of eleven, a change was noticeable in his habits; he shrank from the games in which he had been hitherto amongst the most active. In the playhours he would wander with some friend amongst the neighbouring plantations, and, in those moods of premature gloom and speculation, which so often cloud the dawn of illustrious manhood, complain of present thraldom, and form wild conjectures of future fate. Already he began to throw thought into verse—already he began to meditate the scheme of some elaborate tragedy. But his religious bias was still his strongest, and at the age of fourteen he 1773.
still shared the predilections of his parents in favour of the ecclesiastical profession. But now came the first great revolution and crisis of his life.

Karl, Grand Duke of Würtemberg, a luxurious and ostentatious Prince, but one possessed of many excellent qualities, formed the notion of a great National Academy, first instituted at "Solitude," one of his country places,—afterwards transferred to Stuttgard. This establishment was called a Military

Seminary, but not confined exclusively to those intended for the military profession.

The majority of the pupils were, indeed, the sons of officers—or even privates—in the Würtemberg Army; but the sons of civilians were admitted also; and suitable instruction was given to students intended for the peaceful profession of the Law. But the school rightly deserved the distinguishing epithet of Military, from the discipline by which it was characterised.

The father of young Schiller had recently been promoted by the Grand Duke to the office of Inspector and Layer-out of the grounds at "Solitude," and was subsequently raised to the rank of Major. But these benefits were not cheaply purchased. The Grand Duke in return desired to send Friedrich Schiller to his Military Seminary. This was tantamount to the rejection of the long-cherished scheme of the clerical profession. After much painful embarrassment, the elder Schiller frankly represented to his Prince the inclinations of himself and his son. The Grand Duke, however, repeated his request, proposed to leave to Friedrich the choice of his studies at the Academy, and promised him, when completed, an appointment in the Royal Service. There was no resisting a petitioner, whose request was in reality a law, and from whose favour was derived the very bread of the family. Friedrich Schiller did not and could not hesitate to sacrifice his own wishes to the interests of his parents. But this renunciation of his young hopes and the independence of his free-will, wounded alike his heart and his pride. With
1773. grief and resentment equally keen, at the age of fourteen he entered the Academy as a student in Jurisprudence. The studies thus selected were, in themselves, sufficiently uncongenial; but to the dulness of the Law Lecture was added the austerity of a corporal's drill. The youths were defiled in parade to lessons, in parade to meals, in

parade to bed. At the word "March," they paced to breakfast—at the word "Halt," they arrested their steps—and at the word "Front," they dressed their ranks before the table.* In this miniature Sparta, the grand virtue to be instilled was subordination. Whoever has studied the character of Schiller, will allow that its leading passion was for Intellectual Liberty. Here mind and body were to be alike machines. Schiller's letters at this time to his friend Karl Moser, sufficiently show the fiery tumult and agitation of his mind;—sometimes mournful—sometimes indignant—now sarcastic, now impassioned—weary disgust and bitter indignation are seen through all. The German works, not included in the school routine, were as contraband articles—the obstacles to obtain them only increased the desire: no barrier can ever interpose between genius and its affections. The love of Man to Woman is less irresistible than the love that binds Intellect to Knowledge. Schiller stole, the more ardently because secretly, to the embraces of his mistress—Poetry. Klopstock still charmed him, but newer and truer perceptions of the elements of Poetry came to him in the 'Goetz von Berlichingen' of Goethe, with which, indeed, commenced the great Literary Revolution of Europe—by teaching to each nation that the true classical spirit for each, must be found in the genius of its own Romance. He who would really imitate Homer, must, in the chronicles of his native land, find out the Heroic Age.

Schiller obeyed the impulse of his own frank and courageous mind in an attempt to regain his freedom. A strange custom at the Academy enjoined each pupil, once a year, to draw up and read aloud an analysis of his own character. Schiller 1774.
seized the first opportunity thus presented to him, to state that his character was not formed to excel in jurisprudence, but to serve God as a preacher.

* Hoffmeister, Schwab, &c.

The confession failed to amend the vocation; but finally he obtained permission to exchange Law for Medicine,—a class for which was superadded to the other academical instructions. The studies for this latter profession were no doubt more congenial to him than those of law, and served, indirectly and collaterally, to enrich the stores of a mind so inquisitive into the operations of Nature. But the discipline in all studies was the same. Had they sought to cure him of Poetry, they would have had but to drill him into being a poet! Meanwhile, he was fast fitting himself for the great destiny to which he was reserved. He devoured the writings of those who were his precursors in German literature. Wieland's translation of Shakspeare fell into his hands. Nothing more strongly marks the peculiar earnestness of his character—the emphatic distinction between Shakspeare and himself — than the effect which he tells us, in one of his own compositions, the great Englishman produced on him:—"When at a very early age I first grew acquainted with this poet, I was indignant with his coldness—indignant with the insensibility which allowed him to jest and sport amidst the highest pathos. Led, by my knowledge with more modern poets, to seek the poet in his works; to meet and sympathise with his heart; to reflect with him over his object; it was insufferable to me that this poet gave me nothing of himself. Many years had he my entire reverence—certainly my earnest study—before I could comprehend, as it were, his individuality. I was not yet fit to comprehend Nature at first hand!" Nor indeed was Schiller ever able, as Shakspeare, thoroughly to separate himself from his creations. The peculiarities of his mind inclined him, if they did not limit, to the delineation of grave and elevated characters, and his heart, always in unison with his mind, led him to incorporate himself with the beings he invoked; bidding them be serious with his own intellect, or ardent with his own emotions.

His friends were few, but they were well selected, and they shared his inclinations, if they had not his genius, for literature. They formed a sort of intellectual fraternity. Each was to compose something, for which all dreamed of publication and fame—one a romance after 'Werter;' one a pathetic drama; one a chivalrous imitation of 'Goetz von Berlichingen;' Schiller himself (fired by Gerstenberg's 'Ugolino') a tragedy, called 'The Student of Nassau.' This he abandoned afterwards for one of which he composed several scenes, and of which a part yet lives transferred to 'The Robbers,' viz., 'Cosmo de Medicis.'

Meanwhile his poetical talent found its first (and the usual) vent in the corners of a periodical 1776-7.
Magazine. At the age of sixteen and seventeen appeared in the Suabian Magazine some small poems (very judiciously omitted from the collected editions of Schiller's works), in which the imitation of Klopstock is sufficiently visible. "O, then was I still," he exclaimed later, "but the slave of Klopstock!" Nevertheless, the editor of the Magazine, Balthasar Haug, found promise in the midst of extravagance and bombast, and prophesied that the young poet "would one day do honour to his father-land." *

The more his inclinations grew confirmed, the more sensibly he became alive to the formal tyranny by which they were opposed. No youth was less likely to be corrupted by Voltaire; but bitter was his resentment at the disgrace he incurred, when discovered reading one of Voltaire's works. "O, Karl," he exclaims in his correspondence with young Moser, "so long as my spirit can raise itself to be free, it shall bow to no yoke!" In fact, the Man's mind was ripened long before the Poet's genius. Crude, hard, laboured, and extravagant were Schiller's earliest efforts; but the soul from which Poetry springs as a well, clearing itself the more the farther

* Schwab, Hoffmeister.

it advances from its source; a soul ever observant of beauty; ever on the search for truth; ever brave in difficulties; ever fierce against restraint; *that* was the same in its large elements, when the Boy, in vehement bombast, declaimed against the blood-stained laurels of a conqueror, as when the Man planted the robust step of Tell on the soil of Switzerland, and drew forth from the obloquy of ages the virgin glory of the Maid of Orleans.

At last this long and terrible conflict between Genius and Circumstance became decisive. The cry of the strong man went forth. The Titan moved beneath the mountain!

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## CHAPTER II.

Brief review of some portion of German literature immediately previous to the appearance of Schiller's 'Robbers.'

It was precisely that time in Germany, when an Author, whatever his defects, might hope for a favourable hearing, provided his genius carried onward the revolution that had already taken place in literature, and sympathised with that more dangerous movement which had begun to disturb society and agitate opinion.

In literature, the old Gallomania, which for half a century had been vigorously opposed by sincere Poets and sturdy Critics,* had become almost extinct, except in the small royal circles where 'Seigneur Oreste' and 'Madame Hermione' still maintained their ground. The German genius had already arrogated a dynasty, and found in Klopstock an altar and a throne. What Klopstock† *wrote* is comparatively unimportant; what Klopstock *did* is

* Among critics, Bodmer and Breitinger; among poets, Von Haller and especially Gellert.

† Born 1724.

sublime. No matter that his 'Messiah' was overrated,—that even his Odes are more tumid with cloud than instinct with fire: Rather a verbal musician than a poet,* his poetical imagination is doubtless frigid, and the weakness of his thoughts in vain disguises itself in redundant epithets and syllabic pomp: But he had two other imaginations besides the poetical,—the imagination of the heart,—the imagination of the conscience. He was an enthusiast for his country and his religion. He felt like an honest man, and he wrote like a man in earnest. It has been truly observed, that, after Klopstock, "Germans were no longer ashamed to be German." If he was not absolutely the first to awaken the national spirit, he made it popular with the people, fashionable with the great, ardent in the young, solemn in the pious. There is not a German poet coming after Klopstock, who is not indebted to him; indebted to him for a German audience—for that prevalent sentiment of patriotism and devotion in the Public without which the Poet sings to lay-figures, not to men. What was begun by Klopstock, was continued, with profounder views and on a grander scale, by the illustrious Lessing.† Well does Heine‡ exclaim, that "Lessing was the literary Arminius, who freed the German Theatre from every foreign domination:" Nor the Theatre alone —all German Art was embraced by the vast range of his criticism and the stalwart vigour of his genius. It is impossible to overrate the excellence of Lessing's intellectual nature, and the noble tendencies of his ambition. Though he modestly denied to himself the qualities of the Poet, and though some shallow depreciators have echoed his own assertion, he

* One of the greatest of the German critics has observed that Klopstock's odes, to be appreciated, should be accompanied with music—that he wrote, as it were, to tunes and airs.

† Born 1729.

‡ 'Zur Geschichte der neuern schoenen literatur in Deutschland.'

enters even into prose with the majesty none but Poets can assume. In his 'Emilia Galotti,' domestic relations are elevated into the sublimest tragic passion. This drama is the German Virginius. No man has ever so happily effected the difficult union of heroic sentiment with modern manners. Greater even as a critic than a creator (and in the former character far more popularly renowned), he served both to place Art in its true sphere, and to enlarge its domain. Manliness was his characteristic in life and in tastes. Like Schiller, he loved to delineate Human Nature in its nobler qualities, and to sympathise with its graver ends, rather than, like Goethe, to dissect its infirmities, or, like Wieland, to trifle with its interests;—the 'Werter' of the first disgusted him—the 'Agathon' of the last enraged. Lessing had the nationality of Klopstock without his prejudice. If Klopstock were the first National Poet for the Public, Lessing was the great National Writer for the Writers. That a taste for German Poetry should exist, Klopstock was necessary. That Herder, Schiller, and even Goethe, should have been what they were, Lessing must have lived.

But though the influence of Lessing was so profound, it was not of a nature to be widely popular, nor to be clearly comprehended, save by its after-results: and his great career was now approaching to its close. He died in February, 1781, leaving a Public prepared for manly sentiments, for energetic purpose, for genial humanity, in those writers whom his mind had formed.

At the period we enter (about 1780-1), Wieland* stood next to Klopstock in popular opinion. Amiable both in manners and in tastes, of mature years and established fame, if he was less decidedly national than Klopstock and Lessing, he was yet highly influential in the formation of the National

* Born 1733.

Literature. He also was a *First*, an Originator—the first who taught the delicacies of Taste to German strength—the first who taught the various imitators of the Gallic or Grecian Muse how, without imitating, to appropriate—the first in whom learning seemed airy as intuitive observation; and in whom the fancy of a genuine poet, and the fluency of a charming novelist, were blended with the erudition of a scholar, and the elegance of a man who has known the world. Partly French, partly Greek—he is German through all; a German who commenced his education at Paris, and finished it at Athens. We enter not into a discussion of the precise rank Wieland should assume,—a rank too readily conceded at one time, too harshly questioned now. But his influence limited itself to the fancy and the taste—it did not extend to opinions—it did not root itself in passions. His great defect was his want of earnestness and purpose. He may charm and he may refine; but he does not brace the intellect to masculine exertion, nor elevate the imagination to lofty objects. At this time he sate on his careless throne at Weimar, rather to receive homage than to govern. But there were now already labouring into fame three young men; two of whom, at least, were destined not only to wear the robes of sovereignty, but to wield the sceptre—Herder, Goethe, and Johann Heinrich Voss.

The minds of these three men had been formed under the most powerful influence which a Frenchman had ever yet exercised in Germany. Always prone to imitate (as a learned people necessarily must be), the Germans had escaped from the old Gallomania to fall into Grecomania and Anglomania—while one was imitating Theocritus, another was imitating Pope. The English Richardson, who, though less popular in Germany than Fielding, produced a far more profound impression, as, indeed, that greater Genius must do wherever the two can

penetrate,* may be seen overshadowing the large mind of Lessing himself. The sublime Clarissa, whom Dishonour so noiselessly slays, is the original of the no less sublime Emilia Galotti, who flies to Death from even a sentiment that dishonours. But in vain Klopstock and Lessing had thrown from their pedestals Racine and Corneille—in vain Wieland had given to the Germans a more kindly, if a feebler Voltaire of their own—a new Gallomania had seized the heart, and fevered the brain of the People: Greek and Briton, all gave way to the influence of ROUSSEAU. Nothing is more interesting to one who seeks with Helvetius to trace the connection and sympathy between social influences and literary tastes, than to contrast the nugatory effect produced in England, with the prodigious effect produced in Germany, by this unhealthy Genius. Though, at two great periods in the history of our Literature—that of Elizabeth, and that of Anne—the Italian and the French writers have influenced our own, our more illustrious authors have rather reproduced than imitated; and with the single exception of the Sterne-fever, the Literature of Sentiment has never been widely successful with our practical and busy population. But in Germany, always, as we have said, prone to imitate, no imitation was likely to be so contagious as that which combined sentiment with thought. The peculiar habits of life amongst the Germans—the absence for the most part of that active constitutional liberty

* The influence of Richardson upon the fiction and poetry of Europe was not only vast at the time, but, enduring still, it must endure for ever. In vain his language grows obsolete, in vain his minuteness has become wearisome, in vain the young race of novel-readers leave him on the shelf —to those somewhat tedious pages turns every genius who aspires to rise in fiction; from them, though with toil and study, can best be learned the art of extracting from the homeliest details the noblest pathos. In 'Clarissa' is beheld that true spirit of tragedy which first dispensed with kings and heroes and the paraphernalia of the outward stage—teaching how the compass of all grandeur in fiction can be attained by him who can describe the affection, and comprehend the virtue, of one human being.

which, when accompanied with commercial pursuits, always tends, overmuch perhaps, to harden and materialise the national mind—do not present to domestic life the counterpoise which the life of the Mart and the Agora effects in England. Books which dispose the mind to abstract reverie or speculation, exercise a greater influence over the Germans than they do over us; a theory appears to them the more seductive in proportion as it is detached from the experience of practical life. Either wholly contented with the existing state of things, or wholly amidst the clouds of Utopia—they want that intermediate standard to which the mass of Englishmen unconsciously refer every suggestion of change or project of reform. The love of liberty, instinctive to all, and especially to nations at once so brave and so lettered as the German, finds that vent in the ideal from which it is precluded by the actual. Hence, while practical liberty amongst the Germans is so confined when compared with ours,* their theoretical liberty—liberty of thought, opinion, and speculation—is infinitely greater. The most religious German will start inquiries which an irreligious Englishman would be afraid to suggest: And the Politician who would shrink from arguing for a Representative Constitution, will luxuriate in the dreams of Republican Fraternity. Precisely the reasons that deadened the influence of Rousseau in England, gave it vitality in Germany, viz. impracticability in politics, and morbidity in romance. Our own active life, that rude common sense which is acquired with our mother's milk, amidst our world-awake population, would teach even an ordinary Englishman the untruth that forms the groundwork of 'The Social Contract,' and shock our sense of nature in the eloquence of St. Preux. We know, without reasoning about it, that no Social

* The reader will remember that this was written in 1847.

Contract ever existed, and that no lover, worthy the name, could sit down to make an inventory of furniture five minutes before his first assignation with the woman he professes to adore. But with the Germans the novelty of the political theory concealed its falsehood; the sentiment of the fiction concealed its want of nature. There was much in Rousseau that could not fail to charm and to dazzle the German mind, which, from its own deficient experience of agitated and various life, perceived not his ignorance or perversion of nature in character and passion. The Germans could fully comprehend his love and his knowledge of *inanimate* nature; his enjoyment of scenery; his passion for solitude; his power of associating the landscape around with emotions within. Their own fondness for domestic and rural life made them charmed with the primitive simplicity which he held up to admiration. The vast mass of disappointed ambition, which amongst an intellectual population, without the multiform vents of a free constitution, must necessarily be engendered, found a voice and a sickly comfort in Rousseau's disgust of the active world. The ardour for liberty —the revolutionary spirit, awakened in Germany as in France—obtained in the Dreamer of Geneva a representative nearly akin to the amiable and tender character of the Germans. The biting mockery of Voltaire might delight a court and charm a scholar; but the earnest and pious heart of the multitude recoiled from a spirit that desecrated what it attacked, to open itself with dangerous emotion to a spirit that sought to sanctify what it embraced. The laughing philosopher never makes disciples so devoted as the weeping one. With Rousseau rose the great sect of HUMANITY; the school which seeks to lift human nature above convention; which would extract from social life all that is harsh and tyrannous; and (to use the phrase of Seneca) recognise a claim to kindness wherever it looks upon the face of man.

Upon Herder, Goethe, and Voss, the influence of Rousseau produced effects, perhaps equally strong, but widely differing in their nature. Herder* rejected all that in the Genevese was effeminate and egotistical, to seize upon all that was genial and philanthropic. In him arose the true Preacher of Humanity: with Rousseau Humanity was a sentiment; with Herder it became a science. Of a mind thoroughly sound and healthy—of a cultivation vast and various—of a broad common sense which gave life and substance to the boldest speculations, Herder snatched from the weak hands of the French Socialists the great cause which they profaned—viz. the Principle of Human Progress, recognised it through History, illustrated it through Poetry, and reconciled it to Religion as the law of God. For Herder the noblest destinies were reserved. By profession a preacher—by energy a citizen—by genius a poet—by piety and wisdom a philosopher and cosmopolite—all that is intellectual in man may be said to have *flowered* in him. With a great inclination towards what is practical in life, which he sometimes regretted he had not more diligently studied in its minutiæ, he combined an innocence of heart in which lay half his strength. "My whole life," he said once, "is the interpretation of the oracles of my childhood." He loved to glean thoughts from the conjectures of childhood—from the wonder of ignorance. Hence he saw in the infancy and youth of nations the beauty and the promise which historians have overlooked. Thus he was the first who gave to Poetry its proper place in the grave and solemn dispensations of the world:—regarding it as the absolute voice that spoke the time and character of a race, he brought into one vast compendium, entitled 'The Voices of the Nations,' the popular songs of all countries. Amongst the many influences he lived

* Born 1744.

to effect upon his age, is the impetus he gave to that tendency in the German genius, which is called "Universalism." For, as Humanity to Politics, Charity to Virtue, Christianity to Man, so is Universalism to Letters.* That separation between the faculties—that division of mental labour so general elsewhere—in Germany was broken down. The Poet studied Philosophy—the Philosopher Poetry. But most of what Herder lived to effect, was as yet unfulfilled. He was already known as a scholar, an essayist, a victorious prizeman, an eloquent preacher—and in high station and repute at the Court of Weimar. But still he stood somewhat apart from the popular literature of the time; and had rather served to indicate the great change destined to take place in public taste and feeling, than to dispirit, by his own renown, the ambition of another.

While Rousseau had thus influenced Herder only to grand results; the primitive simplicity, the pastoral family life which Rousseau had held up to admiration amongst the homely Germans, had sunk deep into the mind of a rude young Saxon—Johann Heinrich Voss,† not worthy, indeed, from his mere genius, to be named in the same breath with Herder and Goethe, but still, for many reasons, not meriting the depreciation of Schlegel, and the disdain of Menzel. Low-born, self-educated, a rigid Protestant sectarian, driven for bread to the drudgery of a

* Herder is a very voluminous writer, but the epitome of his mind and his views is to be found in his work on the 'Philosophy of the History of Mankind.' The work is not without grave faults. It is often incorrect in detail; it too much follows Helvetius in founding authority on the imperfect accounts of travellers and voyagers; it is often displeasingly declamatory in its tone. But its power of generalisation is astonishing. It seizes, as with the grasp of a giant, the immensity of the subjects it embraces. Few works deserve so justly the epithets of *luminous* and *comprehensive*. Readers well acquainted with this work will find many of its ideas, even some of its images, borrowed by Schiller in his later poems, though it would seem unconsciously. Schiller never appears to have been aware of his great obligations to Herder.

† Born 1751, two years after Goethe.

schoolmaster, Voss is often vulgar in his taste, pedantic in his compositions, prejudiced and intolerant in his polemics. But withal, he is a true German, and a strong man. His services to his language were immense. He enriched it with the wealth of the foreigner; he strengthened it with the cultivation of its own national resources; he revived the old words of Luther on the lips of Homer. It is well said of Voss that his strength is in his war with obstacles. He hewed his way through poverty into learning; and he cut through rough crags * of diction, till he found out a fount of poetry all his own. But, as yet, Voss was young,—if not obscure, at least but partially known,—and had neither obtained, by harsh and ungrateful controversy, the title of the second Luther, nor given in his 'Luise' and his 'Idyls' (poems most popular in their time, and thoroughly repugnant to English taste) the pastoral of a Curate's Parlour, and the model to Goethe's 'Herman and Dorothea.' First, then, already in popular eminence, of the three we have named—first, indeed, of all the younger and rising generation, stood Wolfgang Goethe.† Nor had *he* then escaped, perhaps he never altogether escaped, from the influence of Rousseau. In fact, it is the merit of this wonderful man, that his whole nature was especially plastic and impressionable. Every influence of his time stamped itself on his intellect, to be reproduced in new forms by his genius. Does the age incline to sentiment? he sounds its abysses:—To irony? the sneer of Voltaire seems venomless beside the icy smile of the fiend he calls from hell, to mock at human knowledge, and desecrate human love! Does the age yearn for Pastorals and family life? he turns from courts and the seventh heaven of Poetry to borrow

* "Versified marble blocks."—*Heine.*
† Born 1749, five years after Herder.

from homely Voss; and ruins him by the riches he extracts from the loan. In his 'Werter' he concentrates the history of an epoch in his country,—the epoch of the Rousseau Mania. But though the 'Nouvelle Héloise' is incontestably the origin of 'Werter,' those* who regard it as a mere copy do it miserable injustice. There is more rhetorical eloquence in one page of the '*Nouvelle Héloïse*,' than in the whole of '*Werter*'—but there is more nature in one page of '*Werter*,' than in the whole of the '*Nouvelle Héloïse*.' In this, the warmest and most actual of all Goethe's novels—if once overrated, now so unjustly depreciated, which he did right to regret for its moral, which he did wrong to disparage as a proof of his genius—lies the germ of much that, in fiction, its author's riper intellect matured. Here we see that association of homeliness and grandeur which his enemies have called "the Adornment of Commonplace." What Englishman, with his fastidious classical taste, has not ridiculed the contrast of the Hero in the clouds, and the Heroine cutting bread and butter—of the solemnity of deliberate suicide, and the exact description of the top-boots and blue coat in which the unhappy man rushed to the dread Unknown? But considered by a higher art than we learn at college, it is this very homeliness of detail that gives truth to the romance. And this peculiarity Goethe continued, as he advanced in his luminous career, to invest with an unspeakable beauty. It is, in truth, to a very early study of what, while subtlest in the essence, is simplest in the form, that Goethe owes the lucid ease of his after style, and the popularity he secured to flights of imagination which, in a less artful writer, would have left the multitude far behind. Here, too, we see a yet more distinguishing attribute of Goethe, to which we have before alluded—viz. the inclination

* Such as Menzel.

to describe, not so much the healthful nobleness, as the diseased infirmity, of an intellectual character. What he here does in 'Werter,' he did afterwards in 'Clavigo,' in the 'Elective Affinities,' in 'Faust,' and in 'Tasso.' Menzel, who, whatever may be thought of his injustice to Goethe, demands the greatest respect for his honest passion for what is sincere and noble—for his vigorous sense—for his daring courage—falls into a cant unworthy of so great a critic, when he accuses Goethe of confounding vice and virtue, by depicting weak or dishonourable characters as interesting and amiable. It is among the most legitimate, and among the highest provinces of the Poet, to depict those contrasts which subject him to this charge—to show a vice in the virtuous, and a virtue in the wicked; and this unquestionable truth in art once granted, it follows as the very condition of fiction, that to a hero thus selected, human interest must be given. You cannot blame a Poet for making a faulty hero interesting, unless you contend that heroes of fiction must be perfect *—by which dogma you would at once cut off from the Poet the whole realm of the human heart, and separate his ethics from the representation of Truth and Nature. This love, indeed, of probing the sores of character—of representing the infirmities of intellectual man—was not more remarkable in Goethe than in Shakspeare; who, in the whole range of his Dramas, has never presented to us a single male image of perfect virtue; who, in Macbeth, in Othello, in Angelo, in Shylock, in Hamlet (the last is so Goethe-like, that if Shakspeare had never created it one might predict that Goethe would have done so), lays bare, with fearful precision, the weakness of the wise—the crime of the virtuous. It is in vain to deny that our paramount interest in all these plays

* Or unless you contend that, if a hero is faulty, the author must not make him interesting; but whatever an author does, he must give it interest. No author is obliged to be dull.

is with the erring, or the infirm. But who shall say that Shakspeare, while interesting us in the hero, sought to pervert our conscience into admiring the defect: that it was his object to decorate ambitious murder, or jealous ferocity; licentious hypocrisy, or implacable revenge; or to womanize the intellect, and emasculate the will, by all the doubts and scruples which make up the philosophy of Hamlet?—Hamlet, that great fountain-head of modern sentiment—from which have gushed a thousand rivulets of melancholy and scepticism; Hamlet, that perpetual mirror to minds fluctuating between the Visible and the Unseen, the Actual and the Ideal, the stern demands of uncomprehended duty, and the desire to escape from practical action into visionary self-commune; Hamlet, in whom is shown the mysterious prototype of what man would be with virtue, and with wisdom, but without WILL!

But though Goethe does not seem to us to be blamed for following the tendency of his genius, into directions in which the peculiar delicacy and subtlety of his intellect ensured him such success; and though, a hundred years hence, we believe that what Menzel and other depreciators consider immoral, will not mislead a single imitator, or corrupt a single youth; yet it must be conceded that the *direct* object of his works was not to make Man more manly, and his desires more elevated. We say the *direct* object; for indirectly, and sooner or later, whatever makes man wiser,—nerves his mind, and purifies his emotions; and there may be truth in the theory, that Art is to be cultivated as Art; that the Beautiful must reflect indifferently on its tranquil mirror whatever Convention deems moral or immoral: For, to whatever is really and essentially vicious, the Beautiful itself is opposed:—Convention revolts at the exhibition of the naked form, but foul must be the imagination that finds immorality in the Venus of the sculptor.

At this date, however, Goethe was still scarcely out of his apprenticeship. His greatest works had not been produced. On his 'Goetz von Berlichingen,' his 'Werter,' and his 'Clavigo,' rested the principal columns of the renown he had acquired. These, indeed, had unsettled the public taste, and prepared it for bold innovations; but Goethe had not, like our Byron in a later day, engrossed the general interest in himself, and become the sole representative of a common sentiment. In that crisis of opinion and of passion preceding the outbreak of the French Revolution, and contemporaneous with the rise of daring speculators and profound inquirers, men required something more than the childlike pietism of Klopstock, the airy elegance of Wieland, or that philosophy of sentiment—that analysis of man's weakness, so apart from sympathy with men's interests, which Goethe had exhibited in 'Werter' and 'Clavigo.' Something indeed was wanting still; something, it is true, which in order to be popular must necessarily partake of the morbid craving, the unsettled spirit, the revolutionary tendency of the time, but which, in order to outlast the hour, must also develop into fuller force, and diffuse through a wider public whatever in Lessing had been earnest, whatever in Herder promised to be humane. There was a great multitude which as yet in Germany had found no voice; which desired to hear its own discontented heart beat in the pulse of some passionate Author, indignant with what was false, and sympathising with what was free. Never, in Germany, had there been a time more favourable to a writer (no matter what his other defects) who, shouldering aside courts and schoolmen, should address himself manfully to men.

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## CHAPTER III.

The publication of 'The Robbers' — Schiller's life at Stuttgard — His love for Laura—and poems in the Anthology — 'The Robbers' — Brought out on the stage — Schiller's arrest — Fears, and determination to escape from Würtemberg.

At this time there was published at Mannheim a strange, rugged, fiery melodrame, in which, amidst uncouth masses of extravagant diction,—flashed a spirit true to all the turbulent and unsettled philosophy of the hour—and which seemed destined to announce and to animate the revolution of a world: —'The Robbers' appeared, and the sensation it excited spread through the mind of Germany like fire through flax;—nor through Germany alone—it produced in France the liveliest enthusiasm; it even stirred to its depths the calm intellect of England. It was, in fact, the most earnest Revolutionary fiction that had yet revealed what lay hid in the History of the Age.—What the irruption of the old Germans was in the midst of the smooth and decrepit civilisation of Rome,—was the burst of this new German amidst the hollow conventions which under the *ancien régime* less guarded the life of Virtue than entombed her corpse.

'The Robbers' is one sweeping uncompromising defiance of the sober proprieties in which the mature see decorum and the young dissimulation. It is the baseness of the World that makes Karl Moor a criminal. It is in proportion to his exaggerated nobleness that he is unfitted for Society. It is because he is a giant that he cannot live amongst the dwarfs. He commences life with many virtues, and it is the mediocrity of life that turns every virtue into sin. It is his sympathy with poverty and suffering, with the virtuous and oppressed, that has banished the Demigod to the rock—and afflicted him with the ever-gnawing vulture.

That a work like this, so conceived, and executed with all the power which can whirl along the passions of the crowd, must have produced a great deal of mischief at the time, may be readily allowed. No man can disturb the settled course of opinion, right or wrong, without doing evil as well as good.—Whether Genius innovates in a poem, or Science in a manufacture, some minds in the one case must be thrown into disorder, some hands in the other thrown out of employ. But Genius and Science must still obey the great instincts of their being—the one still innovate, the other still invent. In the moral constitution of nature, they are the great alterative, the "Sturm-Bad," which first fevers and convulses, then purifies and strengthens. But nothing could be farther from the mind of the Boy from whose unpractised hand came this rough Titan sketch, than to unsettle virtue, in his delineations of crime. Virtue was then, as it continued to the last, his Ideal—and if at the first he shook the statue on its pedestal, it was but from the rudeness of the caress that sought to warm it into life.*

The original sketch of this drama Schiller had completed two years before the publication. But he kept it by him till he had completed his medical studies, towards the end of 1780, and been appointed by the Duke to the office of Surgeon to a regiment. He then considered himself a free agent, and 1781.
after searching in vain for a bookseller to Ætat. 22.
hazard the necessary expenses, he published 'The Robbers' at his own cost.

If the popularity of the work was dazzling, the aversion it excited in some was as intense as the

* Goethe himself has somewhere said that the most universal effect of the highest Genius is to *unsettle*; and certainly it has ever been so where its effect upon its age could be traced—witness Cervantes, Bacon, Luther, Milton (especially in his prose works). Shakspeare, not studied in his own time, has influenced, by unsettling, the literary mind of three Nations at the least: in our own day, Byron and Wordsworth are, in their several ways, equal Innovators.

admiration it called forth in others. But the most formidable critic was the Grand Duke himself. This uncouth drama displeased his taste no less than it revolted his opinions. He sent for the author, and bade him in future eschew poetry, and stick to medicine; or, if he needs must write, submit his productions to the revision of his Prince. It is easy to sneer at the conduct of the man of power to the man of genius; but the Grand Duke was scarcely to blame, for there are few individuals now-a-days whose taste 'The Robbers' will not offend, and we may judge of the abhorrence it excited at that time in others, besides the Grand Duke, by the words addressed by an illustrious personage to Goethe, "If I were a God, and deliberating whether I should create the world, and foresaw that in that world Schiller's 'Robbers' would appear, I would not create it." Meanwhile, however, the young Poet had commenced a correspondence with the Freiherr von Dalberg, a nobleman intrusted with the superintendence of the Theatre at Mannheim, and the play was to be
January, 1782. remodelled for the stage. Simultaneously appeared many lyrics and minor poems of the author, contributions to a miscellany entitled 'The Anthology,' and set up in concert with some of his friends. A large portion of these performances, characterised, it is true, by power, though distorted, and originality, though uncouth, still belonged to a very inferior and coarse school of poetry, known in Germany by the significant title of the 'Storm and Stress'*—a school of which some notion may be gleaned by those who turn to that later era in our own literature, when the servile herd of imitators mixed up, on their staring canvas, the sepia of Matthew Lewis with the gamboge and vermilion of Lord Byron. Most of these Schiller rejected from the collected edition of his works; some of those

* The German phrase is thus happily translated by Mr. Carlyle, in one of his 'Miscellaneous Writings.'

retained have been wisely corrected and compressed. Such as they were, however, they added to the sudden celebrity of the writer. And now, while Germany began to ring with the name of the young Poet, what was his life? He lodged in a small apartment, which he shared with a young officer named Kapff, who had quitted the academy at the same time. Kapff is said to have been of dissolute habits,* and to have occasionally misled his wild and impetuous companion into some irregularities; favoured the more by the general licence of a town to which the earlier example of the reigning Duke had given a tone of manners the reverse of austere.† Still such irregularities never degenerated into habit, and were counteracted in their effects upon the mind by Schiller's frequent visits to his excellent family, the tender warnings of his mother, the fortunate narrowness of his finances,‡ the professional demands upon his time, and that passion for literature, with which systematic indulgence in dissipation and disorder is, it is true, not always incompatible, but to which it is certainly opposed. Above all, perhaps, we must be permitted to believe that the young Poet was saved from more vagrant and unworthy excesses, by that great purifier of youth—First Love. In the same house lodged the widow of a captain, who appears, by all probable accounts, to have been the original of the 'Laura,' to whom the most impassioned of all his love-verses are addressed. A humorous, but somewhat flippant, friend of Schiller's—Scharffenstein—has described this lady in the same spirit of caricature with which he has treated of the noble image of Schiller himself. He says, "she was not pretty, nor clever; but had something about her, good-natured, *piquant*, and at-

* Schwab—who rests this assertion againt Kapff upon *unprinted*, and, therefore, very suspicious testimony. Probably poor Kapff lived like most young soldiers, neither worse nor better.

† Hoffmeister.

‡ Madame von Wolzogen.

tractive." One of Schiller's biographers hints at unpublished accounts, less flattering; but what is unpublished is necessarily unsifted and unsupported; and we have no evidence whatsoever to invalidate that on which the Poet himself commands our interest for one who could make so vivid an impression on his heart. Schiller was, no doubt, at least as good a judge of beauty and of cleverness as his friend Scharffenstein.

It would be impossible for a critic of common sense to suppose, with certain metaphysical commentators, that this love was merely Platonic. Platonic love in Schiller! As well talk of Platonic love in Burns! The poems themselves, in their very faults, bear internal evidence of the healthful and natural passion of the man, which takes poetry for its vent—not the vanity of the poetaster who would simulate the great passion of man, in order to obtain a vent for his verses.

But whatever this affection, it seems to have burned out from its very fierceness, and (though, years afterwards, the Poet speaks of the resignation of Laura as the great sacrifice of youth), it was obviously very different from that steady, pure, and permanent attachment which ultimately made the happiness of his manhood.

At last, on the 13th of January, 1782, 'The Robbers' appeared on the stage at Mannheim. The sensation the printed play had produced served to crowd the theatre. Near and far, from Heidelberg and Darmstadt, from Frankfort, Mayence, and Worms, gathered the audience. The play lasted five hours. The success in print was trivial to that upon the stage. The fiery rebellion of thought which it embodied became more startling when animated by the art of the greatest actors of the time,* and hailed

* Bök acted Karl Moor with prodigious effect: but that is a part which almost plays itself. Iffland, a man of real genius, elevated the disagreeable character of Franz Moor into the dignity of an Iago. His representation of this part seems to have been one of the most perfect as well as

by the enthusiasm of spectators, in whom, as everywhere in 1782, the spirit of Revolution was astir.

We can easily imagine the impatient desire of Schiller to witness his own triumph. He went by stealth to Mannheim. In an obscure corner of the crowded house, the author beheld the living embodiment of his own thoughts and passions. He saw himself raised at once into that mighty power—the mover of the hearts of men. He returned to Stuttgard confirmed for life in the vocation his genius had adopted. "If Germany," he wrote to Dalberg on his return, "shall one day recognise in me a Dramatic Poet, I must date the epoch from the last week." 17th Jan., 1782.

But in proportion to the ardour of his inclinations, was the restraint of Schiller's actual life. At Mannheim, he was the freeman, the poet; he returned to Stuttgard to sink again into the subaltern and the subject. Some expressions in the third act of 'The Robbers,' reflecting upon the national character of the *Grisons*, gave such offence to the objects of the rude and boyish satire, that their complaint was published in 'The Hamburgh Correspondent,' and, by the mediation of a man named Walter, who bore some personal grudge to Schiller, laid before the Grand Duke. The result seems to have been a very severe reprimand on the part of the Duke, and a peremptory injunction to Schiller to confine his studies to Medicine—his publications to such as befitted his profession—to abandon all connexion with States under other jurisdiction (meaning Mannheim), limiting his ambition to his calling, and his connexions to his country.* Such a command could

one of the most popular triumphs of the stage. His thin figure and meagre countenance, suiting well with the ideal of a formal hypocrite, served to increase the actuality of the personation. Iffland, like Schiller, was commencing his career; he was then about six-and-twenty, according to Schiller's biographers; three-and-twenty according to other authorities, who state his birth to have been in April 1759.

* Schwab, &c.

not be obeyed by a man urged to resist by the stronger despotism of his own genius. Already new and vast designs were opening to Schiller's intellectual ambition; already he had commenced and proceeded far in the tragedy of 'Fiesco;' already meditated a drama on the fate of Don Carlos of Spain. To ask him to renounce these projects was to ask him to renounce the very mind by which they were formed. His first visit to the Mannheim theatre had been undetected or overlooked; he went again in the following May, and was put for fourteen days under arrest. Dangers now beset him; dark and sinister menaces were repeated to him by officious friends, and exaggerated perhaps in their import by the gloom of his imagination. But the dangers in themselves were real and imminent. Before his eyes was the fate of the Poet Schubart,* eight years imprisoned for displeasing the jealousies of Power. What fate could seem more terrible to one drunk with the desire of liberty, and eager to spread the wings of his genius? Stuttgard, nay, all Suabian scenes, as he himself complains, in a letter to Dalberg, "became intolerable and loathed." He could have had but small comfort from his family. His father as yet regarded his notoriety with dislike and fear. He was not a prophet in his own country, nor an honour to his own hearth;—with disgust he saw all around him;—with sanguine self-confidence he cast his eyes beyond. He formed the only resolution natural to his circumstances, and worthy of his independence: he resolved to emancipate body and soul both; to fly from Stuttgard, and throw himself on the world.

* An Appendix to Mr. Carlyle's 'Life of Schiller' contains an interesting account of this unfortunate poet.

## CHAPTER IV.

Flight from Stuttgard — 'Fiesco' read to the actors — Adventures and wanderings — Schiller finds refuge at Bauerbach — Commencement of 'Cabal and Love.'

AMONGST Schiller's companions was a warmhearted enthusiastic musician, two years younger than himself, named Andrew Streicher. This youth became his confidant. Together they brooded over the future—together they conceived and nursed the project of escape. It had been intended that Streicher should proceed to Hamburgh in the spring of the next year, to take lessons in his art from the celebrated Bach.* He persuaded his mother to consent that the date of this journey should be advanced, and the friends settled that Schiller should bear him company. But Schiller, with all his inexperience, and all his fiery ardour, had that strong sense with which true genius prepares for the fulfilment, even of its wildest schemes. He felt the necessity of providing, from his own talents, the materials for their support. He would not leave Stuttgard till his tragedy of 'Fiesco' was nearly completed. In that tragedy lay his fortune and his future. He worked at it night and day—illness seized him, but the work went on. At length it was sufficiently advanced for presentation to the Mannheim Theatre, and the opportunity now offered itself for escape.

1782.

The city and its neighbourhood were astir with the visit of the Grand Duke Paul of Russia, and his young Princess, niece to the Duke of Würtemberg. In the midst of these festivities the flight was planned.

It was obviously necessary to conceal from the elder Schiller the designs of the son; the military notions and military duty of the former might not only lead him to forbid, but to disclose them. And the young Poet was moreover anxious, that whatever

* Not the great Sebastian Bach, who died in 1750.

the displeasure of his sovereign, it might fall on himself alone—not involve his father. But his eldest and favourite sister was admitted to his confidence ;—the little girl who had wandered with the dreaming boy through the ruins of Hohenstaufen, and amidst the pines of Larch, was become a woman, capable of sympathising with the lofty hopes of the adventurous man: and at last, a day or two before the meditated departure, the truth was broken to Schiller's mother. With his friend Streicher, and the wife of the Stage Manager at Mannheim, Madame Meier (whom, as well as the Director Dalberg, the royal festivities had drawn to Stuttgard, but from whom the secret was carefully kept), Schiller for the last time visited his family at "Solitude." He took the opportunity, which his father's absorption in his own account of the royal preparations afforded, to steal with his mother unobserved from the room. After an hour's absence, he returned—alone. The affectionate gaze of Streicher saw what he had suffered in that parting interview, by the redness of his eyes. The important day was now fixed—the 17th of September.

Streicher removed from Schiller's lodging a bundle, containing the dress which was to be substituted for the uniform of the Regimental Surgeon—some linen, and a few books—among which were the works of Haller and Shakspeare. But when Streicher came to fetch Schiller himself—after the return of the latter from his final visit to the Hospital—he found the young enthusiast with Klopstock's Odes in his hands. A favourite ode had given unseasonable inspiration to his own muse, and the impatient musician was forced to wait and hear, not only the seductive ode, but the poem it had called forth. At last all was ready—day passed—night came—Schiller had assumed his disguise; three-and-twenty florins constituted the Poet's wealth, eight-and-twenty the Musician's; two trunks, containing books and ap-

parel—a brace of pistols—and a small clavichord, summed up the effects of the fugitives. At ten o'clock the vehicle which contained the adventurers rolled from Streicher's lodging to the Esslingen Gate (the darkest of all the City Gates), at which the Lieutenant of the Watch was a firm friend of the Poet's. "Halt! who goes there?" "Dr. Ritter and Dr. Wolf, both bound to Esslingen." "Pass."

The escape is made. Towards midnight they beheld, at the left, the illuminated Ludwigsburg, like a mount of fire; further on, and at the distance of a mile from their road, they saw the castle of "Solitude," and the neighbouring buildings, lighted up in honour of the Royal visitor. In the clear air, all was so distinctly visible, that the poet could point out to his companion his parents' home; and a suppressed sigh—a soft "O meine Mutter"—escaped him! So fled from the capital of Würtemberg, Friedrich Schiller, "empty"—as, with little exaggeration, he himself has said, "of purse and hope;" esteemed as a rebel by his Sovereign; condemned as a scapegrace by his father; regarded but as an imprudent reckless scribbler, marring his own fair prospects for a vain ambition, by his associates!—He who now visits that capital finds little to arrest his interest—except one colossal statue, in a broad space near the Royal palace; before which his guide will bid him halt to contemplate Friedrich Schiller—the pride of his Fatherland!

The travellers reached Mannheim in safety. They unpacked their boxes, and put on their best clothes; it was a holiday—they were out of the Grand Duke's dominions—they were free! Schiller's hope was in his 'Fiesco.' In a few sheets of paper lay all that was to give bread to existence, independence to labour, and glory to ambition. Dalberg was at Stuttgard; but Meier, the manager, received them with kindness. When he heard, with astonishment, the bold step Schiller had taken, he urged the expediency

of an immediate letter to the Grand Duke. This, indeed, Schiller had already resolved upon. In the small German States, the relation between prince and subject is more parental and patriarchal than in the larger Monarchies of Europe: if the prince be more despotic, the subject can be more familiar. After dinner, to which the young friends were invited by Meier, Schiller withdrew into another apartment, and wrote frankly to his Sovereign; it was a letter at once manly and respectful. He represented how impossible he found it to live upon his professional gains as a surgeon;—his income could only be made sufficient by his literary labours. He prayed for permission to try his fortune for a short time out of the Duke's dominions, and declared his willingness ultimately to return on receiving his Sovereign's pardon. The letter was enclosed to the chief of Schiller's regiment, General Augé, with a petition to present, and to support it. The next day Madame Meier returned from Stuttgard, with the news that Schiller's flight was already notorious; and that it was expected that the Grand Duke would demand the delivery of his person. As Schiller, however, was not a soldier, he could not be treated and reclaimed as a deserter; still it was deemed advisable that he should not show himself till the Grand Duke's answer was received. A letter from General Augé came at last; it preserved perfect silence as to the request Schiller had preferred, and only announced to him the permission, or implied the order, immediately to return. Schiller hastened to reply to the General, that he could not regard the Grand Duke's message as a compliance with his request, which he again respectfully urged. A second letter from the General laconically repeated the purport of the former one. Schiller's pride, his spirit of independence, and his honour became engaged. He could not recall the step which had delivered him from an intolerable bondage: the die was cast, and he resolved, as he

himself has expressed it, "to exchange the citizenship of his country for that of the world."

Meanwhile Streicher had fired the manager with his accounts of 'Fiesco;' a day and hour were fixed for Schiller to read his new performance to the more distinguished actors, among whom was Iffland. The young poet commenced his reading,—all listened in silence,—not a word of approbation. At the end of the first act some slipped away; at the end of the second, the disappointment grew more unequivocal; and a quarter of an hour afterwards, the poet had lost all his listeners except Iffland. Meier now took aside Streicher, and asked him seriously, "if Schiller really were the author of 'The Robbers'?"—"Certainly," said the astonished friend. "Then," answered Meier, "he has exhausted his strength in his first performance." But the manuscript was left with the experienced manager, and the next morning, when Streicher repaired, full of painful anxiety, to Meier, he was accosted with "You are right, 'Fiesco' is a masterpiece!—better fitted for the stage than 'The Robbers.'" It was Schiller's Suabian dialect, and his high-pitched monotonous mode of declamation, that had done such injustice to his genius—a perusal of the play excited Meier's warmest admiration, and Streicher went back to his friend with the welcome news, that arrangements would be made to produce 'Fiesco' on the stage. Alterations requiring some time were nevertheless indispensable, and it became necessary to remove farther from the power of his offended prince. Warned by letters from Stuttgard, Schiller and his friend resolved to pass to Darmstadt, near Frankfort. Their money was nearly gone. Sorely pressed as he was, Schiller had so tender a consideration for his parents, that he would not apply to them, lest he might bring upon his father the suspicion of conniving at his flight. With enough barely to defray the expenses of their pilgrimage on foot, the two friends set off one day at noon; rested

at night in a village; resumed their way the next morning over one of the most striking roads in Europe (the Bergstrasse); continued their journey for twelve hours; rested from six in the evening till midnight, when they were wakened and alarmed by the drums of a reveille. Notwithstanding Schiller felt himself unwell, with the early morning the journey was resumed; the day was serene and clear, but Schiller's strength failed his spirit; his step grew every moment more weary, his cheek more pale: at last, on entering a wood, he was unable to proceed further; he laid himself down for an hour's rest upon the grass; and Streicher, seated on the trunk of a tree, anxious and sorrowful, watched beside him. The young man, struggling with his destiny, may take heart for the future when he contemplates the picture of that wearied sleeper, homeless and penniless, but already on his path to the conquest of Destiny itself, and the only throne which no revolution shakes, and no time decays—in the hearts of men.

They reached Frankfort at last, and Schiller addressed a letter to Dalberg:—"When I tell you," he says, "that I am flying my country, I describe to you my whole fate. My safety obliged me to withdraw in haste from Stuttgard. My sole hopes rested on a removal to Mannheim; there, I trusted, by your Excellency's assistance, that my new drama might enable me to clear myself from debt, and permanently better my condition. This was frustrated through the hasty departure to which I was compelled. I might blush to make such disclosures to you, but I know they do not debase me. If my former conduct—if all that your Excellency knows of my character—can induce confidence in my honour, let me frankly ask your assistance. Greatly as I need the anticipated profit from 'Fiesco,' the play cannot be ready for the theatre in less than five weeks. My heart was oppressed—my poetic dreams fled before the sense of my condition. But if at the

time specified the play could be ready, and, I trust, worthy,—from that belief I take the courage to ask the advance of what would then be due. I need it, perhaps, more now than I may ever do hereafter. I owed nearly 200 florins when I left Stuttgard. This gives me, I own, more uneasiness than all the care for my future fate. I shall have no rest till in that quarter I am free."

After this letter he was more relieved; and yet, on returning from the post-office to which he took it, he paused on the bridge, beneath which flows the Maine: he gazed long in silence on the river, and said at last, "Which is the deeper, that water or my sufferings?" But no brave man, and no true poet, can remain long despondent in the midst of a world enriched by the activity of his kind, and upheld by the goodness of his Maker. The very sight of that bustling scene; the vessels sailing to and fro; the river gilded by the setting sun; the clear evening air; the fresh and cheerful wave; amidst the smiles of Nature, the evidences of that Nature's subjugation to the will and the power of man—these gradually drew him from his sadness, and reanimated his soul. His very misfortunes, throwing him so wholly on his own resources, quickened his invention, and the next evening he announced to his friend, that he had conceived the plan of a domestic play, entitled* 'Louise Miller,' which was afterwards completed, and finally became famous under the title of 'Cabal and Love.'

A letter from Meier arrived at last, to say, that while 'Fiesco' remained unfit for the stage, Dalberg could not make the proposed advance; that the work must be completed before he could say more. No disappointment could be more cruel. But Schiller bore it undauntedly. He uttered no complaint; not one harsh, one indignant word passed his lips. He

* According to Madame von Wolzogen (Schiller's sister-in-law), he had, however, first thought of the subject of this play during his military arrest at Stuttgard.

prepared only to comply with the condition that was imposed. The friends were reduced to a few small coins, when Streicher received thirty florins, for which he had written to his mother; and with this aid they left Frankfort. A line was, however, first despatched to Meier, requesting him to meet and agree upon some place in which 'Fiesco' might be completed with safety and in repose.

Finally, it was settled that Schiller should take up his residence in an inn at Oggersheim, once more changing his name from Ritter to Schmidt; and here, still accompanied by the devoted Streicher, he shut himself up to compose his glorious taskwork. But so much, while most occupied, did his mind shrink from what was ordained to it, that, instead of completing 'Fiesco,' his domestic drama of 'Cabal and Love' engrossed all his thoughts and labours. Perhaps in a play which sought to prove the tyranny and the prejudice of conventional rank, he found something more congenial to his peculiar condition than the loftier conception of the conspirator of Genoa. The two friends shared one chamber, one bed; the Poet had his play—the Musician his instrument. And Streicher, whom we esteem no less for his self-devotion than Schiller for his indomitable courage, soothed the labours of his friend with the notes of his clavichord. Again their resources were exhausted; again poor Streicher applied to his mother for the money intended for his professional journey to Hamburgh. Necessity then tore Schiller from the new work, and restored him to the old. Early in November 'Fiesco' was completed.

But fresh disappointments awaited Schiller. After the suspense of a week, Dalberg reported of 'Fiesco' that a part of it was not yet fitted for the stage, and that it must either be rejected or improved. Nothing could be more chilling, more laconic, more heartless, to all appearance, than the reply of this literary courtier. Schiller had been greatly instigated in his

flight from Stuttgard by his reliance on Dalberg's professions of esteem and friendship. And now not a word to comfort, much less a florin to support! Before the laborious student rose the sense of a condition thoroughly desolate and alarming—the recollection of his debts at Stuttgard; more than all, the remorse of having implicated his faithful friend in his own ruin. It was evident that Dalberg, with that sympathy which all courtiers have for the grievances of all courts, regarded Schiller as a political offender, and feared to befriend one with whom a Prince was displeased.

Two resources were left: firstly, to find for the two plays a publisher who would advance some money upon their probable profits; and secondly, to take advantage of a generous offer—an invitation which might well put to the blush the niggard heartlessness of Dalberg.

At the Stuttgard Academy, three young men of good birth, named von Wolzogen, had been educated contemporaneously with Schiller. The eldest of these, Wilhelm, was afterwards amongst his most intimate friends; their mother, a widow, in straitened circumstances, had known and admired the Poet at Stuttgard; she offered him an asylum in a small house she possessed at Bauerbach, about two miles from Meiningen. The advancement of her own sons was in the hands of the Duke of Würtemberg. She hazarded much by receiving into her house the persecuted fugitive; but the magnanimity of her friendship would not take the peril of a good action into account. Thither, then, Schiller resolved to fly. A Mannheim bookseller, named Schwan, advanced upon 'Fiesco' sufficient to discharge the debt incurred at Oggersheim, and defray the expenses of the journey to Bauerbach. In a winter's night—the snow deep upon the ground—the generous Streicher bade him farewell; or rather, no word was spoken, no embrace exchanged—a long and silent clasp of

the hand was the only token of an affection which had endured so much hardship, and consoled through so much sorrow. "But yet," says Schiller's German biographer, with simple eloquence, "the Musician, after fifty years, was filled with grief when he recalled the moment in which he had left a truly kingly heart—the noblest of the German Poets—alone, and in misfortune."

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## CHAPTER V.

### Residence at Bauerbach.

As on a December evening, 1782, the wanderer beheld, beneath the old ruins of the Castle of Henneberg, the lights of the scattered houses of the village of Bauerbach gleaming through the deep snow, he felt, as he himself says, "like a shipwrecked man, who struggles at last from the waves." Here, though the family themselves were absent, everything that could comfort and welcome him, awaited. He remained unknown and secure; a bookseller of eminence at Meiningen (Reinwald), who afterwards married his sister, was admitted to his secret, and cheered his solitude with books and his own society. Sometimes he made a companion of the steward of the property, played with him at chess, or wandered, with him, through the woods which surround that country.* The calm, the security and the solitude were, at first, beneficial to his mind and to his labours. The two plays were completed, and despatched to the bookseller, Schwan. But now, his ardent imagination, having thrown off its tasks, began to prey upon itself.

* A singular anecdote is related by Madame von Wolzogen. One day, in his walk with the steward, Schiller paused in a lonely spot between wild rocks, and was seized with a notion that a dead body lay below. In fact, a poor carrier had been murdered there, and his corpse had been buried in the very place.

He passed, though for a short time, and with reluctance, into that state common to all good men, in proportion to their original affection for their species—*misanthropy.* No man ever was, in reality, a misanthrope, but from too high an opinion of mankind, and too keen a perception of ideal virtue. "I had embraced," complains Schiller, "half the world, with feelings the most glowing, to find a lump of ice within my arms."* The wild and desolate scenery around him—the dreariness of winter—served to increase the gloom that seized him. His prospects were, in reality, such as might render the hardest sensitive, and the boldest anxious. The present might be safe, but at any moment he might be cast again upon the world. His gratitude to his friends made him feel that his asylum must be resigned the moment the Grand Duke discovered it. And, even as it was, could his spirit long bear the thought of dependence, obscurity, and disguise? Still, he was without a country, still without a career. He seriously thought of abandoning poetry, and returning to the medical profession; sometimes the wilder notion of exile to England—to America—possessed him. This state of mind was, perhaps, fortunately invaded by a romantic and hopeless fancy, rather than the love for which he mistook it.

Madame von Wolzogen visited Bauerbach.

In Charlotte, the youngest daughter of his benefactress, Schiller found an image to replace his Laura. He could not expect encouragement from the mother, nor does it appear that his attachment was returned by Charlotte; but he was at that age when feeling is easily awakened, and as easily misunderstood by the heart which feels it. The love of youth, before it settles for life, hovers over all to whom the fancy

* Shortly after this period, on his settlement at Mannheim, he announced his intention of translating Shakspeare's 'Timon,' and says, "In all Shakspeare there is no piece in which he more loudly and eloquently speaks to my heart—or in which I have learned more of the Science of Life."—*Rhein. Thal. Heft.* 1, s. 13.

allures it. The Cupid, with the expanded wings, and the arrow on the string, is but the false Anteros:—In the true Eros, the wings are folded, and the bow is broken. Certainly this was the most critical period in the life of Schiller, moral and intellectual. If new persecutions, whether of power or of opinion, had now befallen him, it is at least doubtful whether he would have ever attained to a name at once so revered and so beloved—whether indignation and disgust might not, in a spirit so proud and so impetuous, have ripened into permanent defiance of the world, and its existing orders and forms.* Who shall say whether it would have been in the power of Schiller, in the nature of man, to have preserved the genial purity and kindliness which had been the early concomitants and softeners of his restless and fiery genius, if, at this moment, he had undergone from the public of his fatherland the same fearful calumny and injustice which, in the anguish and the trial of existence, hooted Byron into exile? None of the earlier writings of Byron can be compared for a moment, in their offences against settled opinions, to those which the youth of Schiller sent forth to agitate society and inflame the mind. 'The Robbers,' 'Fiesco,' 'Cabal and Love,' are, one and all, defiances of Prescription. The revolutionary stamp is upon each. To ordinary observers they might well appear the more dangerous, from the systematic purpose which seemed to pervade them all. In England, such works would have given impunity to the slander of literary envy, and the bigotry of political hate. But there was a nobler temper in the German public;—there was granted to Schiller what, despite the greater temptations of birth, and beauty, and prevalent example, was never conceded to our immortal countryman — the allowance for unsettled youth and imperfect education;—and the

* "Oh!" he exclaims, in a letter to Madame von Wolzogen, " you cannot believe how *necessary* it is to me to find *noble* human natures!

result should be a lesson to the public in all lands: His manhood was the splendid redeemer of his youth.

Suddenly, in the midst of Schiller's anxious gloom and conflicting emotions—at the very moment when hypochondria was fast darkening over his heart and unnerving his intellect—the sun broke out upon him. The Duke of Würtemberg, whose resentment never seems to have been ungenerous or vindictive, tacitly relinquished all thoughts of persecuting a man in whom the whole of Germany began to feel a romantic interest. The courtier Dalberg perceived that the time was come when, without imprudence, he might bring to the aid of his theatre the author of the most popular drama of the time. He invited Schiller to Mannheim. The young Poet's plays were to be produced upon the stage—the object of an ambition, modest as to temporal means, vast as to intellectual empire, was attained. He was appointed, with a fixed, though very limited salary, Poet to the Theatre at Mannheim, then the first in Germany. On the evening of the 22nd July, 1783, he arrived at the town in which the foundations of his dramatic glory had been laid; and, at the house of Meier he was once more beheld—but, this time, with a cheerful and radiant countenance—by his faithful Streicher.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### Residence at Mannheim.

BUT it is one thing to print a drama—another to represent it. 'Fiesco' still required great alterations to adapt it to the stage. One essential cause of the theatrical success of Schiller, was the earnest readiness with which he lent himself to the suggestions of practical criticism. He was not like many of our

young authors who write for the stage, and will not sacrifice a passage to what they call the arrogant ignorance of managers and actors. Unless the Poet obtains and follows the advice of manager and actor, he may depend upon it that he will never command an audience. While employed upon the task of revising 'Fiesco,' and its companion Drama, Schiller was seized with fever, which exhausted his strength and protracted his labours. But, in nothing is Schiller more an example to us than in his iron perseverance and diligent industry. These were the very elements of his genius. Perhaps they are so of all genius that accomplishes what is great and lasting. Through weakness and through sickness he toiled on.

'Fiesco' was not so successful at Mannheim as had been anticipated. Schiller complained that the public of the Palatine could not understand it; that with them Republican Liberty was an empty sound. But, in Berlin and Frankfort, it produced a considerable sensation, which reacted on the Mannheim audiences, and soon secured its fame. It was followed, in March or April,* by 'Cabal and Love,' which obtained the most brilliant reception.

On the first representation of this drama Streicher found his reward for all his friendship. He sate by the side of Schiller; he heard the rapturous applauses it excited; he saw all eyes turn to the Poet; he had shared the adversity—he participated in the triumph.†

Schiller's existence was now assured. He had found a country, as well as confirmed his fame. He was acknowledged a subject of the Elector Palatine. He had no longer any cause of apprehension from the Duke of Würtemberg. He was elected a member of the German Literary Society established at Mannheim. The circle of his intimates was thus enlarged

* On the 9th of March, according to Schwab; somewhere in April, according to Hoffmeister.

† At the end of the second act the audience shouted applause so much more emphatically than usual, that Schiller, taken by surprise, rose and bowed.

amongst men of the same pursuits, and his ambition corrected and guided, by comparison between himself and others. New resources were opened to him; and his ambition could not readily settle upon any one of the numerous objects by which it was allured. He proposed at first to translate 'Timon of Athens,' and 'Macbeth,' but ultimately returned to 'Don Carlos.' This was the first drama, commenced in the retirement of Bauerbach, which he had attempted in verse; and herein he first ascended, though with an uncertain step, towards the higher and purer realm of ideal fiction, in which his genius finally fixed its home. A marked change, indeed, was now visible in his modes of thought. He took loftier conceptions of the aims and duties of the Poet. He became aware of the moral deficiencies of 'The Robbers;' he meditated a sequel to that play, which should be an ample apology for its predecessor, and in which "all immorality should be resolved into the highest moral."* He reassumed his early instincts of the preacher; not indeed as from the pulpit, but from the boards. He laid down to others and to himself the principle, that the Stage should take its rank with the Church and the School amongst the primary institutions of a state. In proportion as representation must be more vivid than dead book-lore and cold narration, so assuredly might he think that the stage should work lessons deeper and more lasting than mere moralising systems.† Whether he did not overestimate the possible influence of the theatre in modern times, may be reasonably doubted. But that very exaggeration could only serve to purify his ambition and elevate his aims.

Meanwhile, his pecuniary circumstances, though improved, and though, perhaps, sufficient for a strict economist, were not adequate to the wants of a man so liberal, so charitable, and so careless of detail and

* Schiller's 'Brief an Dalberg,' s. 85, &c.

† Hoffmeister.

method. Wrapt in his ideal realm, he forgot the exigencies of practical life. "Hogarth," says his biographer, "might have been inspired by the disorder of the young Poet's chamber." His debt at Stuttgard still weighed upon him, till at length his landlord lent him the money to defray it. He resolved upon new efforts to emancipate himself from all difficulties. He undertook a periodical called the 'Rhenish Thalia,' from which he anticipated to reap an independence. In the announcement of this work he speaks thus of his own views and hopes: "I write as a Citizen of the World who serves no prince. Early I left my father-land, exchanging it for the great world, which I only beheld at a distance, and through a glass." He proceeds to speak of his education; his poetic enthusiasm; his 'Robbers;' his flight from Würtemberg; and thus continues:—"All my former connexions are dissolved. The Public has become my all, my study, my sovereign, and my confidant. To the Public alone henceforth I belong. Before this tribunal, and this tribunal only, I take my stand. Something of greatness hovers over me as I resolve to know no restraint but the sentence of the world—appeal to no throne but the soul of Man!"

Dec. 1784.

This frank and stately egotism was thoroughly characteristic of Schiller. And the reader will readily understand how much, as in the case of Byron, the admiration for the Poet became associated with interest in the Man. Grave men, whom he did not know, wrote to offer him their homage; fair maidens, whom he had not seen, transmitted to him their miniatures. But in the midst of his labours and his increasing fame, his heart was lonely. He pined for love and for female society. In the bustle of the town he recalled with a sigh the retirement of Bauerbach. Forgetful of the gloom which had, there, so often overshadowed his solitude, he looked self-deludingly back to the winter months he had spent amidst its

pine-trees as amongst the happiest of his life. The image of Charlotte von Wolzogen haunted him; but it was rather as the ideal Egeria of the nympholept than as the one living woman who renders all others charmless and indifferent. "To be linked to one," he says, "who shares with us joy and sorrow; who meets us in our emotions, and accommodates her mood to our humours; at her breast to release our souls from the thousand distractions, the thousand wild wishes and unruly passions; and drown all the bitterness of Fortune in the enjoyment of domestic calm;—ah! such were the true delight of life." He proposed openly to Madame von Wolzogen for her daughter Charlotte; but, thoroughly convinced at last of the hopelessness of that pursuit, his desire for love in the abstract soon found its object elsewhere. Margaret, the daughter of Schwan the bookseller, was one in whom he might woo an equal, and reasonably hope to find a return for his affection. She possessed great personal beauty, and a lively turn of mind; "rather devoted," say, with some malice, the good German biographers, "to the world, to literature, and to art, than to the tranquil domestic duties." She was then nineteen years old, and the death of her mother had placed her at the head of the household. Schiller's literary intercourse with her father necessarily drew him much into her society; and about the autumn of 1784, the fair Margaret gained possession of a heart still somewhat too inflammable for constancy.*

With the new love he resumed the new drama; and the passion for Margaret burns in many a line which proclaims the affection of the ill-fated Carlos. But new circumstances began to conspire against the repose of Schiller, and his conti- 1785.

* It appears, indeed, that in the interval Schiller had admitted the influence of some wilder and less refined passion than either Margaret Schwan or Charlotte von Wolzogen had inspired, and to which he alludes with frank regret, in a letter some years afterwards to the lady whom he married. The object of this passing fancy has apparently baffled the research of his biographers.

nuance at Mannheim. The periodical he had commenced, without greatly increasing his resources, embroiled him with the actors. Those worthy personages were mightily concerned at the freedom of his criticisms; he in turn was no less aggrieved by their slovenly repetition of his verses, and their irreverent treatment of himself. His ambition had been diverted into new paths, by the dignity of Councillor* of the Duchy of Weimar, conferred upon him by the Duke, who in a visit to Mannheim had granted him an audience. The honour in which literary men were held in the court of Weimar inflamed his imagination. He had not yet entirely resigned the practical world for the ideal; and in Schiller, despite his want of economy and method, there were talents and capacities which were not restricted solely to the pen. One of those who knew him best says of him, no doubt with truth, "that if he had been withheld from the destiny of a great poet, he could not have failed, perforce, to have become a remarkable man of action.† For action Schiller certainly possessed those peculiar qualities which usually ensure success in a career once fairly opened;—indomitable will—the power of earnest application—inflexible honour—and a strong sense of justice.

The rank of Councillor to the Duchy of Weimar thus opened to him a path more alluring than that in which he passed, not over the flowers his youth had fancied, as Poet to a Theatre. After much consultation with some friends at Leipsic, and with Schwan, and in the midst of all kinds of disgusts and difficulties in his residence at Mannheim, it was determined that he should remove to Leipsic. He resolved there to devote himself to Jurisprudence, and to use Poetry, if we may borrow the admirable

* A merely nominal dignity—but it is difficult for an Englishman to comprehend the eagerness with which these petty distinctions are sought for in Germany.

† Scharffenstein. At a later period, Goethe expressed the same opinion.

saying of Sir Walter Scott, 'as his staff, not his crutch.' He communicated these intentions to Streicher, who shared his new enthusiasm. What might not so much industry, in a mind already exercised in severe thought and arduous studies, accomplish in a few years? Some honourable appointment at the least in one of the small Saxon Courts. The friends grew warm over their hopes, and agreed at last to suspend all correspondence till the Poet was Minister, and the Musician Chapel Master! Thus ends—amidst new projects, and on the eve of a new flight—the First Period in the life and career of Friedrich Schiller.

He was only in his twenty-sixth year—and how much had he effected! His name was already a household word in Europe. His genius had not been stationary; the most marked improvement in taste, in thought, in self-cultivation distinguished his more recent from his earlier compositions. Even at this time, the genial and gentle Wieland had prophesied that Friedrich Schiller would be the first man of his age. The very misfortunes, the very errors of his life, had served to augment the true knowledge of genius—viz., experience of the heart—its sufferings—its passions—its infirmities. In 'Fiesco,' as in 'The Robbers,' there is much that is distorted and exaggerated, but the characters move in a far higher atmosphere—the language is chaster and more severe—the descriptive passages want nothing but rhythm to have the beauty and the charm of poetry. All the men are drawn on the large scale of heroes. The magnificence of Fiesco, and the austerity of Verrina, are no doubt contrasted with too distinct a force for the delicacy of art, but the fault is that of a giant, who has not yet learned to subdue and regulate his strength. Still more promise of real and permanent excellence is to be found in 'Cabal and Love;' for, to idealise common life is impossible, save to those who have already perceived

1785.

the great truths in which high Poetry moves and breathes. In these plays, the influences which we have noticed in our brief sketch of the state of German Literature are visible. Through the lurid and stormy phantasies of French republicanism — through the hazy mists of Rousseau's passionate sentiment—may yet be discovered glimpses of the robust humanity of Herder—the noble earnestness of Lessing—the last especially. 'Emilia Galotti' speaks in the Domestic Tragedy of 'Cabal and Love,' and its Odoardo transfuses something of his high spirit into the Verrina of 'Fiesco.' Yet finer influences than even these were now at work upon a mind ever shooting onward, or mounting upward. The study of Shakspeare—necessarily intense to one meditating the translation of 'Timon' and 'Macbeth'—led Schiller, not indeed to *imitate* a genius wholly dissimilar to his own, but to ponder upon the attributes of that genius which were within his reach. He began the transition from what may be called the passionate and declamatory drama to the intellectual and analytical. He says of the hero of the tragedy on which he was now employed, "Carlos has the soul from Shakspeare's Hamlet—the pulse from me." There is little in common, it is true, between Carlos and Hamlet; but Schiller had made a great progress in his conceptions of art, when he studied a Hamlet, in order to create a Carlos.

But in this, as in the several periods of his life, the mirror of his heart and his genius is to be found in his minor poems. In their fervour and exaggeration—their beauties and defects—lives immortally the youth of Schiller.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### SECOND PERIOD.

Schiller's arrival at Leipsic — Proposes for Margaret Schwan — Removes to Dresden — His habits, studies, &c. — His infatuation, and departure for Weimar.

SCHILLER arrived at Leipsic in the midst of its famous Fair. His name was soon bruited abroad, and the throng pressed to see him. But though Schiller was not without that noble vanity which pants for applause, and takes enjoyment in renown, the curiosity of idlers could only offend his taste, and wound his pride. "It is a peculiar thing," he says, writing to Schwan, "to have an Author's name. The few men of worth and mark who on this account offer their acquaintance, and whose esteem confers pleasure, are too greatly outweighed by the swarm who, like flesh-flies, buzz around the Author as a monster, and claim him as a colleague on the strength of a few sheets of blotted paper. Many cannot get it into their heads that the Author of 'The Robbers' should be like any other mother's son. They expected at least a crop, the boots of a postilion, and a hunting-whip!"

Meanwhile Schiller continued his contributions to 'The Thalia,' in which a considerable portion of 'Carlos' appeared; laboured with assiduity at the completion of that drama; and composed, in a happy moment, 'The Hymn to Joy,' by far the noblest lyrical poem he had yet achieved. Insensibly the more worldly ambition with which he had quitted Mannheim, died away. The profession of Jurisprudence was not adopted; but, still anxious to found a livelihood upon some basis more stable than Literature, he meditated a return to Medicine; and, encouraged, perhaps, by the attention and respect he received at Leipsic, he ventured now to demand the

hand of Margaret Schwan. After a preface at once modest and manly, he thus opened himself to her father: "My free and unconstrained access to your house, afforded me the opportunity of intimate acquaintance with your amiable daughter; and the frank kind treatment with which both you and she honoured me, tempted my heart to entertain the bold wish of becoming your son. My prospects have hitherto been dim and vague; they begin now to alter in my favour. I will strive with more continuous vigour when the goal is clear. Do you decide whether I can reach it, when the dearest wish of my heart supports my zeal. Yet two short years, and my whole fortune will be determined. . . . The Duke of Weimar was the first person to whom I disclosed myself; his anticipating goodness, and the declaration that he took an interest in my happiness, induced me to confess that that happiness depended on a union with your noble daughter. He expressed satisfaction at my choice. I have reason to hope he will do more, should it come to the point of completing my happiness by this union. I shall add nothing further. I know well that hundreds of others might offer your daughter a more splendid fate than I at this moment can promise her; but that any other heart can be more worthy of her, I venture to deny." *

A bookseller is generally the last person to choose, as his son-in-law, an Author. He has seen too much of the vicissitudes of an Author's life, and of the airy basis of an Author's hopes in the future, to be flattered by the proposals of a suitor who finds it easier to charm the world than to pay the butcher. He wrote to Schiller a refusal, implying that his daughter's character was not in unison with her wooer's. Till then, a correspondence had been carried on between the young persons; this, Schiller properly and honour-

* We have borrowed the translation of this extract from Carlyle's 'Life of Schiller'—the *Boston* edition, 1833.

ably now broke off, to Margaret's surprise, and apparently to her grief, for her father had not communicated to her Schiller's proposal,—a discreet reserve which seems to prove that he did not reckon on her free acquiescence in his reply. The friendship between Schiller and Schwan, however, still continued, and the remembrance of Margaret never wholly faded from Schiller's heart. "Like all noble and manly natures," says Madame von Wolzogen, "Schiller ever retained an affectionate remembrance of the woman who had inspired him with tender emotion. These recollections moved him always, but he rarely spoke of them; for love with him was always earnest and solemn; not the sensual and fickle boy, but the young Divinity,—who unites himself with Psyche."

Perhaps, to dissipate his disappointment by new change, Schiller yielded to the invitation of friends he had secured at Dresden, and at the end of the summer he repaired to that city, and made a home in the house of Körner, lately appointed Councillor of Appeals * (*Appellations Rath*), and newly married to Minna Stock, an enthusiastic admirer of Schiller.†

Körner's house was placed on the banks of the Elbe, near Loschwitz. A summer-house in the garden, surrounded by vineyards and pine-woods, was soon surrendered to the Poet, and became his favourite retreat. Here 'Don Carlos' made effective, though not rapid progress. This Tragedy, the first (as we have before observed) in which Schiller superadded the purer form and the more refined delineations of Poetry to the vigour and effect of the Drama, put the seal upon his fame. Hitherto, with all the admiration of the many, he had not won to himself that more durable, that more enviable reputation, which is maintained and confirmed by the graver few. But judges, the most critical and refined, shared

* Father to the poet, Theodore Körner.

† Minna Stock was one of the young ladies who had honoured Schiller with their miniatures.

for 'Don Carlos,' in the closet, the enthusiasm it excited on the stage.

But, while engaged in the completion of this drama, Schiller's prodigious activity had already extended the realm his genius was destined to subdue and overspread. Besides the sketch of a Play—'The Misanthrope'—never finished, he conceived the idea of his Romance called 'The Ghost Seer,' and collected materials for the historical works he began to meditate. For History, indeed, his mind was already prepared by the earnest and thoughtful study of character, and of the philosophy of events, which had been brought to bear on 'Don Carlos.' And now this restless and ever-inquiring mind arrived at that stage in which, between the enthusiasm of youth, and the wisdom of manhood, is so often placed the transition-interval of Doubt. That intensity of religious faith and conviction which had characterised his boyhood, had, perhaps, been somewhat roughly shaken by the hard bigotry of his teachers at the Stuttgard Academy; but there is evidence to show that it existed during the composition of 'The Robbers.' Amongst his earlier Poems is one called 'Letter from Julius to Raphael, from an unpublished Romance.' This Romance afterwards took the shape and title of 'Philosophical Letters between Julius and Raphael,' of which only a fragment was printed, but in which the scepticism of the author is first apparent. There is no doubt that this work was remodelled and rewritten during Schiller's sojourn at Dresden, and no reason to suppose that, in its earlier form, it contained the matter for just offence, subsequently admitted.

In these letters appears a crude and wavering conflict between Spinozism and Kantism. With Kant's great work on 'Pure Reason,' Schiller seems to have been first acquainted, but only by hearsay, at Leipsic or Dresden, between 1785-87. It was not till some years afterwards, in 1791, that he studied

Kant at the fountain-head, and learned from him, if not a precisely orthodox Christianity, at least that æsthetical form of religion to which the great German has led so many, who would otherwise have been lost in the pathless wilds of infidelity. But now, much that Schiller composed, shows the doubt and conflict of his mind—a state, to one so constitutionally devout, of great anguish and despondency, and to which, in his later writings, he has many solemn and pathetic allusions. In the 'Philosophical Letters' is to be found the illogical yet brilliant fallacy of Pantheism, which bewildered hopelessly the more erratic intellect of Shelley, but which did not long delude the robust understanding of Schiller. In the Poems which he composed at this time, denominated by critics the Second Period of Schiller, the conflict is visible, though subdued. It was in conformity with this state of mind that Schiller—in whom the intellect was no less strong than the imagination—should turn to that positive and actual Something which is found in the external history of man. Plans too large for one writer to accomplish, hovered before his ambition—some history that might be to practical narrative what the vast conception of Herder suggested to the theory in which history should be told.

He meditated, and, in part, undertook, what, indeed, if ever accomplished suitably, would be one of the greatest records in the world—'A History of all the more remarkable Conspiracies and Revolutions of Modern Times.' Meanwhile, his private life had at once its charms and its sorrows. The love of solitude still clung to him. He was seen in the morning, wandering along the banks of the Elbe, thoughtful and alone; or, like Byron at Venice, when the lightning flashed and the storm burst, tossed in his gondola upon the waves. He disliked, and sought to shun, miscellaneous, and especially what is called fashionable society; he carried his earnest mind, and

his love of freedom, into all circles,—impatient of the talk that was frivolous, and the etiquette that was restrained. But he generally devoted some portion of the day to the interchange of mind with the congenial;—artists, men of letters, or even those who, simple and unaffected, interested his heart, if they could not appeal to his intellect.

Shy and silent in the crowd, he was eloquent with those familiar to him, and his conversation was yet more charming from his simple kindliness, than from the stores which it displayed: this was the bright side of his private life,—the reverse of the medal is only darkly shadowed out. Before his visit to Dresden, Schiller had formed an acquaintance with a young woman named Sophy Albrecht, intended for the stage; he had taken a strong interest in her professional career, and he met her again at Dresden, as one of the most celebrated actresses of the day. He visited at her house on familiar terms, and there, one evening, after the play was over, he saw a young, blue-eyed stranger, who made upon him an impression equally deep and sudden. This girl was the eldest daughter of a Saxon widow, who lived upon a small pension, and whose husband had been an officer in the army. He afterwards encountered the fair Julia (such was the young lady's name) at the "Redoute," and ventured to accost her. The mother was, by all accounts, an artful and abandoned person, who did not scruple to put to profit the beauty of her daughter. She saw, in the admiration of so distinguished a poet, the means of widening Julia's already lucrative notoriety. Schiller was accordingly lured into an intimacy which occasioned the most serious anxiety to his friends.* It seems uncertain whether Julia, who appears to have followed her mother's depraved counsels with something of reluctant shame, returned the passion she had inspired.

† Döring, Madame von Wolzogen, Hoffmeister, Schwab.

There was that in Schiller to have won a worthier affection, despite the unflattering portrait which Sophy Albrecht, in her coarse taste of actress, has drawn of the young Poet.

Schiller, no doubt, at that time, and indeed from his entrance into youth, had lost the mere physical beauty which he seems to have possessed as a child, when his sister compared his countenance, shaded with locks of gold, "to an Angel's head." He was tall, extremely thin, though muscular, and large of bone; his neck was long (a noble defect, which is never without dignity), and his dress was rude and neglected. His face was not handsome, perhaps, in the eyes of actresses,—whose profession leads them to admire show and colour in all things,—but so noble a countenance has rarely been given to the sons of Genius; true, the complexion was pale, the cheeks somewhat hollow, and the dark auburn hair, though rich and profuse, had a deep tinge of red, but the forehead was lofty and massive, somewhat receding towards the temples when regarded in profile (a peculiarity found in most men of characters brave and determined). His eyes, described variously as blue, brown, and dark gray, and probably shifting in colour with the light,* were, though deep-sunken, singularly brilliant and expressive; and his nose, if too large for perfect symmetry of feature, was finely formed. His personal appearance, in short, harmonised with his intellectual character: and as, in Goethe, the pre-eminent attribute both of outward form and mental accomplishment was beauty;† so,

* Madame von Wolzogen says their colour was undecided, between blue and light brown. His sister calls them blue: one of his College friends dark gray.

† Goethe was, perhaps, the handsomest poet of whom we have any record. With a beauty of face not inferior to that of Milton or Byron, he had advantages of stature denied to either,—and that air of majestic dignity which is beauty in itself. We remember being very much struck with a comparison between two portraits of Byron and Goethe, taken when each was about the same age, viz. twenty-one. There was a strong likeness between the two, though Goethe's features, not less symmetrical, were

in Schiller, the pre-eminent attribute in both was nobleness. If, as one who remembered him well declares, the colossal bust of Dannecker alone shows him as he really was in life, no one who has ever seen that likeness will deny, that it is a countenance which strikingly arrests the admiration, and deeply engrosses the interest—a certain grandeur, both of outline and expression, dwarfs into effeminacy whatever portraits of more justly proportioned beauty may be placed beside it. But the actress, describing Schiller at this time, could see only, as was natural to such an observer, the gray, threadbare frock—the general disdain of the toilette—the awkwardness given by pride and reserve to the movements of the tall figure—the indulgence of Spanish snuff—and the stoop of the "ever-thoughtful head." . . Whether or not the fair Julia regarded Schiller with the same eyes as the actress is a matter, however, of very little importance:—not so the love felt by Schiller, since it not only gave rise to some of his poems, but coloured many immortal pages in the 'Ghost-seer.' His friends did their best to dispel his infatuation, and tear him from a connexion which they considered disgraceful to his name, ruinous to his means, and injurious to his prospects; finally, they succeeded in their appeals. He appears, indeed, to have become aware of the treachery * practised on him; and, after many a struggle between reason and passion, at last he tore himself away.

He had long meditated a journey to Weimar—then to Germany what Athens, in the time of Pericles,

larger and more manly: but the contrast in the expression was startling. The German lady who showed us the portraits, observed with truth,—"What dejection and discontent with the world is already stamped on Lord Byron's face!—What calm, yet sanguine energy—what hopeful self-confidence in Goethe's!" The several expression in either countenance seemed almost like a prophecy of either fate.

* Julia had directed Schiller not to enter the house when a light was to be seen in a certain chamber, upon pretence of being then engaged in the domestic circle, while in truth she was receiving some more favoured admirer.

was to Greece; he now accepted a cordial invitation from a friend of his, Madame* von Kalb; and, in the month of July, 1787, he arrived at the little Court, brightened by a constellation of Art and Genius, before which the wealth and splendour of every capital in Europe was, at that day, but as foil and tinsel.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

Society at Weimar — Character of the Duchess Amelia — The Von Lengefelds — Schiller in the retirement of Rudolstadt — First meeting with Goethe — Study of Greek — Death of Madame von Wolzogen — Schiller accepts the Professorship of History at Jena — Life at that University — Courtship of Charlotte von Lengefeld — Schiller's marriage.

Goethe was absent from Weimar,—in "those fair Ausonian climates," the influence of which 1787.
so powerfully affected his plastic genius, and served to give to his after-creations that severe and statue-like repose which has, with all the beauty, something of the coldness and the terror, of Medusa: —Goethe was absent; but at Weimar were Herder, Wieland, Böttiger, and other eminent men. Schiller was not disappointed in the charm of the place. "I think here," he writes, "at least in the territory of Weimar, to end my days—and at last, once more, to find a country." And yet Schiller was not at first fully appreciated at the court to which he was admitted. The Augustan character which Weimar had obtained, originated in the tastes and the talents of Amelia, mother to the reigning Duke. Her especial favourite was the polished and graceful Wieland, whom she

* We have preferred (in this, and other instances), as more familiar to the English ear, the title of *Madame* to that of *Frau*, which is of course more rigidly correct.



had appointed tutor to her son, Karl August. She had been left a widow at the age of nineteen; and fulfilled the duties of Regent during the minority of the young Prince.

To considerable talents for public business, and intuitive knowledge of the world, this remarkable woman added a strong affection for art; and blended a thorough enjoyment of society with a keen thirst for knowledge. She acquired some acquaintance with the learned languages from Wieland, and translated Propertius. The circle of eminent men that she drew around her was attracted no less by her manners than her information and her abilities. But Schiller's genius, as yet made manifest, was not very congenial to a taste half French and half classical; and the Duchess-Mother does not seem to have been aware that in the rude strength of the young Suabian Germany had secured a classic author of her own.* Of all the literary men then at Weimar, the amiable Wieland was the most cordial to Schiller. Herder welcomed him, "but without warmth." Not till a much later period does the Duke himself appear to have taken any very vivid interest in his great visitor. The style of conversation, though intellectual and refined, was not that which Schiller was likely to enjoy—it was too critical, and perhaps too courtly—"more was babbled than was thought." But nothing is more beneficial to a man of genius, yet young, than to frequent society in which he is not over-estimated;—nothing more injurious than to be the sole oracle of his circle. From that period we date a purer and more dignified taste in Schiller—the tone of good society henceforth entered into his writings, and improved his manners: without weakening the one, it brought ease; without marring the simplicity of the other, it served to soften and make social.

* Schiller attributes to the good offices of Goethe (despite his absence) the access to the Duchess Amelia.

At the end of October, Schiller made an excursion to Meiningen, on a visit to his eldest sister, who had lately married Reinwald. Madame von Wolzogen was also at Meiningen; at her house he found his old college friend, Wilhelm; and with this companion he returned towards Weimar. They took the journey on horseback, and proposed by the way to visit some relations of M. von Wolzogen—a memorable visit; for now Schiller approached that bright period of his life when his wanderings and apprenticeship of mind and heart were alike to cease—when his genius settled into art—when his affections were concentered in a home.

At Rudolstadt, on the banks of "the soft winding Saale," in a valley bounded by blue mountains and sloping woodlands, lived a Madame von Lengefeld, with two daughters; the elder, Caroline, married to M. von Beulwitz, Hofrath of Rudolstadt, to whom (more distinguished by the name she acquired in a second marriage, von Wolzogen) we are indebted for a delightful, though somewhat high-flown Biography of Schiller; and the younger, Charlotte, unmarried, and then in her twenty-first year. The father had died when the children had severally arrived at the ages of thirteen and ten. Till that time they had been brought up in close retirement. But a situation at the Court of Weimar being destined for Charlotte when she should arrive at a fitting age, Madame von Lengefeld deemed it advisable to remove for a short time into Switzerland, as affording better facilities for the kind of education necessary for a girl intended to mix in the society of a brilliant and polished court. Three years before the date on which we now enter, the two sisters, who were related to the Wolzogens, had seen Schiller for the first time at Mannheim, and been favourably struck by his appearance. Madame von Lengefeld was then on her return from Switzerland; and the marriage of her elder daughter to M. von Beulwitz, served to settle her residence at Rudol-

stadt. The younger daughter, Charlotte, was highly prepossessing both in form and face. To borrow the description of her sister, "the expression of the purest goodness of heart animated her features; and her eye beamed only truth and innocence." She had a talent for landscape-drawing, and wrote poetry with grace and feeling. But above all, she had sympathy with whatever, in others, was noble in character, or elevated in genius;—her temper was sweet, and her disposition affectionate, faithful, and sincere.

At that time, however, Charlotte von Lengefeld was suffering under the melancholy which succeeds to the first fair illusions of life. Her early affections had been given to one from whom Fate had divided her. Her lover was in the army, and his duties called him to a distant part of the globe. Whether there were other obstacles, besides those of the young man's precarious profession, does not appear clear; but the family were opposed to the connection, and Charlotte von Lengefeld obeyed their wishes in struggling against the inclination she had formed.

Nothing could be more solitary and remote than the little valley in which the Lengefelds dwelt. No high-road intersected it: a stranger was a phenomenon. The appearance of two horsemen along the straggling street, one dark November evening, sufficed to create curiosity and interest. One of the riders, as he presented himself to the Lengefelds, playfully concealed his face in his mantle, but the ladies re-
1787. cognised their cousin, Wilhelm von Wolzogen. The other was unknown or unremembered, till his companion announced the already famous name of Schiller. The simple and shy Suabian, usually distant with strangers, found himself at home at once in the family circle he had entered. The conversation fell on his recent publication, 'The Philosophical Letters,' and on his earlier poems. The earnest Schiller wished the Lengefelds to become

acquainted with his 'Carlos.' A single evening sufficed to form an intimacy. On his departure, Schiller had already conceived the project of spending the next summer at Rudolstadt.

It so chanced that Wilhelm von Wolzogen had, from the early period of his student life at Stuttgard, cherished a romantic attachment to his fair cousin, Caroline von Lengefeld—now Madame von Beulwitz. Her marriage was not happy, and her health was delicate and infirm. Perhaps these circumstances served to confirm in Wolzogen an affection that then seemed hopeless, and was only nursed in secret. But as the two friends rode to Weimar, there was no doubt much in Wolzogen's conversation that found an echo in Schiller's breast. An impression more deep, and yet more calm, than woman had hitherto made upon him, recalled to the poet, amidst the distractions of Weimar and the labour of his occupations, the image of the soft and pensive Charlotte. Fortune smiled upon the dawn of this affection. Charlotte came to Weimar that very winter, on a visit to Madame von Stein, a friend of her family, and Schiller met her in the society of the place, but not frequently. Still he contrived to approach her, as nearly as his delicacy and the consciousness of his precarious worldly circumstances would allow to his pride. He supplied her occasionally with his favourite authors; she undertook the commission to find him a lodging at Rudolstadt for the summer. Occasion was thus found for the interchange of notes. On his part the correspondence was frank, but respectful; it proclaimed friendship and esteem—it did not betray more. "There breathes," in these letters, says an eloquent biographer, "a noble, mild, discreet inclination, without a trace of passion;"—and here the writer we quote adds finely, "Our love is generally the effigy of the one we love. Schiller's present love was the gold, purified from the sensual passion which had mastered him at Dresden." It seems probable,

however, that in neither was the memory of the previous love yet effaced: and this, while it served to invest their feeling for each other with a certain tranquillity, allowed them both more sensibly to perceive the remarkable congeniality between their minds, tastes, and tempers. Thus, as it were, the soul began to love, before the heart was thoroughly moved. Schiller's fame, and his somewhat graver years, permitted him to assume with his young friend a certain tone of warning and advice. That court life, to which she seemed then destined, was opposed to all his ideas of true dignity and pure happiness. And, in the lines closing the second division of his poems, he expresses, in verse, the ideas often repeated in his correspondence.*

In the midst of May, the following year, we find
1788. Schiller settled in the valley of Rudolstadt. He lodged in a house, half-an-hour's walk from the town,† and his chamber overlooked the banks of the Saale, flowing through meadows, and under the shade of venerable trees. There, on the opposite side of the river rose a hill, clothed with woods, at the foot of which lay tranquil villages;—there, high above the landscape, towered the castle of Rudolstadt. A small monument, crowned with a bronze copy of Dannecker's bust of Schiller, yet commemorates his sojourn in this happy valley, recalling Goethe's lovely words—

> "The place that a good man has trod, remains hallowed to all time." ‡

It is thus that the elder sister speaks of those days—the fairest, perhaps, in the life of Schiller:—"How welcome was it, after some tedious visit,§ to see our genial friend approaching, beneath the fair trees that skirt the banks of the Saale! A forest brook, that

* 'Lines to a Female Friend, written in her Album.'
† In the village of Volkstädt. ‡ Hoffmeister.
§ '*Kaffee-Visite*'—Coffee visit: we should say Tea party.

pours itself into that river, and was crossed by a little bridge, was the meeting-place at which we awaited. When we beheld him in the twilight, coming towards us, a serener, an ideal, life entered within us; a lofty earnestness, and the graceful ease of a mind pure and candid, ever animated Schiller's conversation. One seemed, as one heard him talk, to wander as it were between the immutable stars of heaven, and yet amidst the flowers of earth."

But Schiller, during this holiday of existence, was not idle in that solemn vocation of Author—of Instructor—of High Priest in Literature—to which he was sworn. His evenings were devoted to Charlotte and her family, his mornings to study. Here he laboured at his 'History of the Revolt of the Netherlands'—at the correction of the tale so well known in England, 'The Ghost Seer,'—here were concluded his 'Letters upon Don Carlos'—and here was composed the first portion of the finest Poem written at this period of his life, 'The Artists.' In the house of the Lengefelds, Schiller too, for the first time, met Goethe, on his return from Italy. With the works of Schiller hitherto published, Goethe had no sympathy; they contradicted his own theories of art, and they revolted his serene taste. His manner to the Suabian was reserved and cold; the pride of Schiller forbade him to make the first advances; and though, as he wrote word to his friend Körner, the great idea he had formed of Goethe was not lessened by this first personal contact, he doubted if they could ever come into close communication. "Much which is yet interesting to me—that which I yet wish and hope for—has had its epoch for him. His whole being is, from its origin, constructed differently from mine; his world is not my world; our modes of conceiving things are essentially different: from such a combination, no secure substantial intimacy can result. Time will try." *

* Correspondence with Körner: Carlyle's 'Life of Schiller.'

About this time, at the instigation of the friendly and learned Wieland, Schiller turned his attention to the literature of Greece, with which he had hitherto but a very slight and superficial acquaintance. Nothing ever produces a more durable influence upon an author's genius, than the deliberate and systematic recurrence to Hellenic Poetry and Letters. Studied too early, they may often correct the taste at the expense of the fancy; but, studied with the mature thought of manhood, they only strengthen by purifying the inventive faculties. From that time Schiller began to comprehend true art, the vivifier of nature. From that time he became *an Artist.* Homer first engrossed his reverent delight; he passed to the Greek Tragedians; and the character of his mind, which inclined to philosophy, and the tendency of his genius, which was essentially pathetic and humane, rendered ample justice to the still wronged Euripides.*

From these new sources of inspiration came his noble Poem on the 'Gods of Greece,' and the classical perfection to which he brought 'The Artists,' before begun. The former of these Poems, which appeared in the 'Mercury,' superintended by Wieland, occasioned much offence to those who sought orthodoxy, even in the wildest dreams of the Poet. Although Schiller's mind at that time was certainly still unsettled, he yet grieved at an interpretation which he appears not to have foreseen; and at a subsequent period, he sacrificed many of his most brilliant stanzas, in order to purify the whole from whatsoever sincere and liberal piety could reasonably revolt at or regret. The remarkable frankness of his genius often, it is true, led him to depict or to imply his own struggles, and his own errors; but, in his stormiest interval of doubt, Schiller

* We must not, however, suppose that Schiller ever attained to the facility of a *scholar* in Greek. . . In translating Euripides, he had constant need of the Latin version, and even the French of Brumoy.

never contemplated the dangerous and dark ambition of unsettling the religious convictions of others.

Charlotte's admiration of 'The Artists' greatly and seasonably served to cement the affection now ripening daily between them.* In fact, that fine poem no vulgar mind could really relish and admire. In one whom so elevated an appeal to the intellectual faculties could move and animate, a lover might well behold the true companion of a poet's life, the true sympathiser in a poet's labours.

This summer, otherwise so happy, was however darkened by the death of Madame von Wolzogen—Schiller's earliest protectress and second mother. He felt this affliction most deeply—his letter to her son, still extant, is full of tender grief and delicate consolation.

In November, Schiller returned to Weimar, and occupied himself with the conclusion of his 'Ghost Seer,' and translations from Euripides. His chief relaxation and luxury were in his letters to Charlotte—letters unequalled in their combination of manly tenderness, confiding frankness, and refined yet unexaggerated romance; still, though they now betrayed his own love, they did not formally hazard a declaration, or press for a return.

But early in the following year he was called to a new and more active career. Considerable 1789.
portions of his history of the 'Revolt of the Netherlands' had already appeared in Wieland's 'Mercury,' and excited considerable sensation. His friends wished to see him in one of those honourable situations, which, to the credit of Germany, afford shelter and independence to so numerous and brilliant a host of literary men. Goethe (though still not intimate with Schiller) displayed the calm magnanimity towards a rival natural to one in whom meanness was impossible, and employed the interest of his

* Madame von Wolzogen.

rank and his fame on behalf of the young historian. Schiller was finally summoned to take the chair of Historical Professor at the University of Jena. It was not without modest reluctance, and a sense of his own deficiencies in the details of history, that he undertook this office. His reception was such as might be anticipated—Four hundred students crowded to the Lecture-room—their presence and applause animated him—and his voice, naturally not strong, filled the Hall.

Ætat. 30.

Amongst the German youth of this day, Schiller is the favourite; he was then, says Hoffmeister, "the idol." His very defects as a Lecturer were not those on which young men would be severe or discriminating critics. Through the fire and the vigour which animated his language and his delivery, his ardent listeners were not likely to detect that redundant rhetoric, in which genius is too apt to conceal deficient information. He came too fresh to his task. He was acquiring one day, the knowledge he imparted the next. His facts had not been sufficiently meditated, nor his views sufficiently sobered down.

The society of Jena was more congenial to Schiller than that of Weimar—here nothing was courtly and restrained; here manners were diversified and opinions uncontrolled. To this illustrious University flocked the Professors and the Students from so many quarters, that each part of Germany found its representatives. The streets swarmed with all varieties of costume; the halls resounded with all differences of dialect. From the coarsest manners to the most super-refined; from the most limited information and the narrowest prejudice, to the profoundest wisdom—to the most liberal knowledge of the world; all forms of intellect were here mixed and confounded. What a school for a man, who had yet to complete his education by the study of his kind—not in books, but in actual life!

The true poet must divide his existence between solitude and the crowd.

Schiller's correspondence with Charlotte continued; and his chivalrous devotion, the habitual intercourse with his noble and beautiful nature, had produced, at last, its full effect upon his young admirer. The old affection was effaced—the new affection confirmed. Charlotte owned to her sister, "that she had so lived in Schiller—he had so contributed to the formation of her mind, and to her happiness—that it seemed to her impossible to separate her lot from his."

The sisters were now staying at Lauchstädt: thither Schiller (escaping from Jena) visited them; a full explanation of what indeed must have been long since clear to both hearts, took place. Charlotte confessed that the love she had inspired was not unreturned, and promised, one day or other, to become his wife. True, as yet, it was hope deferred, —the fortunes of Schiller were still to be confirmed —the consent of Madame von Lengefeld still to be obtained. But it was enough for the present to feel that love was won. "How different," thus writes Schiller himself to Charlotte, on his return to Jena—"how different is all around me now, since in each step of my life thine image meets me: like a halo thy love hovers over me; like a fair mist does it clothe the face of Nature. I return from a walk: in the vast space of Nature, as in my lonely chamber, it is ever the selfsame atmosphere in which I move; and the fairest landscape serves but for the fairer mirror of one ever-enduring image. The remembrance of thee leads me back to the All; the All reminds me, in turn, of thee. Never so freely and so boldly could I traverse, in my enthusiasm, through the world of Thought as now that my soul has found a possession —a home; and no longer incurs the danger to lose itself in its wanderings: I know where again to find myself—in thee!"

At last came the long-yearned-for holidays. Schiller was released from his task; he fled back to the neighbourhood of Rudolstadt; he occupied his old chamber; he lived back his old life,—but in the brighter air of hope assured and of love returned. As yet, however, the lovers could only hold unwitnessed interviews by stealth; and to this date we must refer the exquisite love poems of the 'Mystery' and the 'Assignation.' At last, but not till after long and severe probation, Schiller's hopes were crowned. After the failure of various schemes and projects, he obtained from the Duke of Saxe Weimar an appointment as Professor Extraordinary, with a salary of 200 rix dollars; and he now boldly applied to Madame von Lengefeld for the hand of her daughter. His suit was supported with zeal and earnestness by Madame von Stein, who had great influence with Madame von Lengefeld, and by M. von Dalberg,* elder brother to the Superintendent of the Mannheim stage, a nobleman of the highest rank, and the most admirable character. Madame von Lengefeld was moved by these instances; her prejudices gave way before the happiness of her daughter and the distinction of the suitor.

The title of Hofrath, conferred on Schiller by the Court of Meiningen, in the beginning of 1790, perhaps served yet more to content the good lady with

1790. her daughter's choice; and on the 20th February, 1790, after an intimate acquaintance of three years, the lovers were united.

Never was marriage, if we except only the narrowness of pecuniary circumstances, formed under more favourable auspices. The very age of the parties was that, in each, in which affection promises to be most durable, and the choice best considered.

* Often confounded with Wolfgang von Dalberg, the Mannheim Baron; but an infinitely better person. It was to the elder brother that Schiller addressed the verses which accompanied the copy of 'William Tell;' not, as Mr. Carlyle supposes, to Wolfgang, who deserved no such honour.

Schiller was about one-and-thirty, Charlotte about four-and-twenty: the length of the courtship had but served to found attachment upon esteem, while it augmented it by delay. The characters of bride and bridegroom were in the most perfect harmony; where they differed, it was but for each to improve the other; the refinement of the woman softened the impetuous man; the noble fire of the man warmed and elevated the gentle woman. Schiller was now really formed for the home he had so long sighed for. With all that depth of feeling and singleness of heart which are common to those fond of solitude, he now combined much which intercourse with mankind alone can give. As all misanthropy had fled from his heart, so all cynicism was now banished from his manners and his dress. He could no longer have been open to the caricature of the Dresden actress; and, independently of his fame, his genius, and his noble heart, a vainer woman than Charlotte von Lengefeld might have been proud of her choice.

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## CHAPTER IX.

Schiller's illness — The sensation produced in Denmark by the report of his death — The letter addressed to him by the Prince von Holstein Augustenburg, and Count von Schimmelmann — Schiller's reply — His study of Kant — Schiller revisits his native land.

SCHILLER was not disappointed in the hopes he had formed of domestic happiness. A few months after his marriage he exclaims in his correspondence: "Life is quite a different thing by the side of a beloved wife, than so forsaken and alone—even in summer. . . . The world again clothes itself around me in poetic forms; old feelings are again awakening in my breast. . . . Fate has conquered the difficulties

for me. From the future I expect everything. . . I think my very youth will be renewed, an inward poetic life will give it me again."* But, alas! even as these lines were written, that bodily enemy for
1791. which the mind so rarely prepares itself was at hand. Disease struck root into a constitution always delicate; he was attacked with a disorder in the chest; and though he recovered from its immediate severity, the head of the shaft was left behind. He never entirely recovered his health—from that time consumption rankled within.

He had been labouring more intensely than ever: to such a man, the consciousness that on his toils rested the worldly comforts of a wife who had resigned a Court for a scholar's roof stimulated industry into fever. He was immersed in severe studies connected with the historical pursuits to which he was now devoted, but the first and most peremptory injunction of his physician was repose to his intellect. . . . . Repose—and his very subsistence rested on activity! At this crisis, however, one of those rare acts of munificence which are the godlike prerogatives of wealth, came to brighten poverty and comfort genius. A report of Schiller's death had been spread abroad: it had reached Denmark, at the moment when a princely circle of the Poet's admirers had resolved to repair to Hellebeck, near Copenhagen, and, amidst its sublime and enchanting scenery, to hold a court in his honour, and chant his 'Hymn to Joy.' Amongst these were the Danish Poet, Baggesen; the Count Ernest von Schimmelmann; the Prince Christian von Holstein Augustenburg and his Princess. Their grief, as enthusiastic as their admiration, changed the meditated festivities into a funeral solemnity.

They met at Hellebeck, on the shore of the sea, opposite the high rocks of Sweden, and Baggesen

* Extracted from the translation in Carlyle's 'Life.'

began to read the hymn. Clarinets, horns, and flutes chimed in to the song of the chorus; two additional stanzas, in honour of the supposed dead, were chanted, and may be thus translated :—

"Hail to a friend, O choir of friends!
The dead we love shall live once more;
Bright to the bowers of heaven ascends
His soul: our lives it hovers o'er.

*Chorus.*—Lift your attesting hands on high;
Swear by this wine from lands made free,*
Till found once more in yonder sky,
Faith to our brother's memory."

As the song ceased, all eyes wept.

Homage to the dead is a vulgar and idle tribute, if it come after neglect or injury to the living. The heart sickens at that mockery of admiration, which allowed Spenser to die of a broken heart, and threw copies of verses into his grave,—which suffered political vengeance to reduce Dryden to a bookseller's drudge, and insisted on burying his dust in the sepulchre of kings. To Schiller's biographers belongs the pleasing task of commemorating the only true homage ever rendered to a dead poet,—simply because the poet was *not* dead! No sooner was the report confuted, than the noble mourners exulted to exchange ceremonial honours to the lifeless, for practical benefits to the living. A letter, from which we extract the purport, was sent to Schiller by the Prince von Augustenburg and Count Schimmelmann.

"27*th Nov.* 1791.

"Two friends, united through the citizenship of the world, send this letter to you—noble man! Both are unknown to you—both love you and revere. They find in your recent works the mind and the enthusiasm which knit the bond of their own friendship; by the perusal of these works they accustom

* *i. e.* French wine.

themselves to regard the author as a member of their own union. Great was their grief at the report of his death; their tears were not the scantiest of those which flowed from all good men by whom he was known and loved. The lively interest with which you have inspired us must excuse us from the appearance of officious importunity. They tell us that your health suffers from too severe an application, and needs for some time an entire repose. This repose your pecuniary circumstances alone forbid you to enjoy. Will you grudge us the delight of contributing to your relief? We entreat you to receive, for three years, an annual gift of a thousand dollars."* The writers proceed with dignity to touch upon their rank, and to imply a delicate hope that it may not prove an obstacle to their request;—they desire not to wound his spirit of independence, or parade the ostentation of patronage. "We know no pride but this,—to be men!—citizens in that great Republic whose boundaries extend beyond single generations—beyond the limits of earth itself." They proceed to invite him into Denmark: "For we are not the only ones here who know and love you; and if, after the restoration of your health, you desire to enter into the service of our state, it would be easy for us to gratify such an inclination. Yet think us not so selfish as to make such a change in your residence a condition: we leave our suggestion to your free choice; we desire to preserve to Humanity its instructor, and to this desire every other consideration is subordinate."

There may be in this letter—which the gratitude of Literature should render no less imperishable than the works of him to whom it is addressed—something of the romantic exaggeration, in tone and phrase, which betrays the influence of the French cosmopolites; but that influence here affected men of noble

* A sum which, at Weimar, would go perhaps three times as far as it would in England.

hearts, who desired to have an excuse in philanthropy for individual beneficence; not, as with the maudlin confraternities of France, an excuse, in the citizenship of the world, from doing good to a single creature!

The effect such a letter produced on Schiller no one can describe—every one can imagine. Nothing but the declaration of his physicians that a visit to so northern a climate would be fatal, prevented him from hurrying to benefactors so delicate and so munificent. In a letter to Baggesen, the depth and manliness of his gratitude are apparent; and this letter is the more interesting, inasmuch as it expresses those views of the dignity of letters, and that repugnance to regard art as a *livelihood*, which may serve the ambition of youthful genius at once with warning and emulation.

"From the cradle of my intellect till now," writes Schiller, "have I struggled with Fate; and since I knew how to prize intellectual liberty, I have been condemned to want it. A rash step, ten years since, divided me from every other practical livelihood, but that of a writer. I had given myself to this calling before I had made proof of its demands, or surveyed its difficulties. The necessity of pursuing it befel me before I was fitted for it by knowledge and intellectual maturity. That I felt this—that I did not bound my ideal of an author's duty to those narrow limits within which I was confined—I recognise as a favour of Heaven. As unripe, and far below that ideal which lived within me, I beheld all which I gave to the world." With feeling and with modesty Schiller proceeded to enlarge upon the conflict between his circumstances and his aspirations, to touch upon the melancholy with which he was saddened by the contemplation of the great masterpieces of art, ripened only to their perfection by that happy leisure denied to him. "What had I not given," he

exclaims, "for two or three tranquil years; that, free from all the toils of an author, I could render myself only to the study, the cultivation of my conception, —the ripening of my ideal!" He proceeds to observe that in the German literary world, a man could not unite the labour for subsistence with fitting obedience to the demands of lofty art; that for ten years he had struggled to unite both; and that the attempt to make the union only in some measure possible, had cost him his health . . . . "In a moment when life began to display its whole value—when I was about to knit a gentle and eternal bond between the reason and the phantasy—when I girded myself to a new enterprise in the service of art, death drew near. This danger indeed passed away; but I waked only to an altered life, to renew, with slackened strength and diminished hopes, my war with Fate. So the letter received from Denmark found me! I attain at last the intellectual liberty so long and so eagerly desired. I win leisure, and through leisure I may perhaps recover my lost health; if not, at least for the future, the trouble of my mind will not give nourishment to disease. If my lot does not permit me to confer beneficence in the same manner as my benefactors, at least I will seek it where alone it is in my power, —and make that seed which they scatter, unfold itself in me, to a fairer blossom for humanity." And he did so!

Thus enabled to enrich while he relaxed his mind, Schiller devoted himself with ardour to the study of Kant.* With the closer knowledge of this philosopher—who, whatever his defects, certainly did more than any other reasoner to counteract the hard and narrow scepticism of the French Encyclopædists,

* Conz, Professor of Poetry and Eloquence at Tübingen, who visited Schiller in 1792, says that he was then thoroughly absorbed in Kant. Conz gives a charming picture of Schiller's simple and frugal life. "He was," says the Professor, "Humanity itself, and his excellent wife a pattern of complaisance and modesty."

—to bring imagination to the aid of Faith, and at once to enlarge the tolerance of the sectarian and to calm the doubts of the seeker—really commences the Third Period of Schiller's intellectual career, though his biographers postpone its date to the time when its fruits became practically apparent.

In June 1792, Schiller and his wife visited Körner at Dresden: On their return, they received Schiller's mother and youngest sister, Nannette, whom he had not seen for eight years. The tender associations thus revived led the mind of the exile back to his Suabian home. In August 1793, the Schillers, therefore, commenced an excursion to the Poet's father-land.* At Heidelberg, Schiller met once more the object of his early love, Margaret Schwan, now like himself married to another; he saw her with a deep emotion, which his wife comprehended too well to resent; he who sees, unmoved, the one in whom he formerly garnered up his hopes of home, can never constitute the happiness of the home he has found with another. 1792.

At Heilbronn, unsurpassed, even in Germany, for the peculiar beauties of its landscape, the family of Schiller met the long-lost wanderer. He stood amongst them no longer a rude stripling, a penniless exile;—but the favourite of princes, the idol of a people—his hopes fulfilled—his destiny assured; crowned already with renown, and calm in the certainty of triumphs more splendid yet to come. He had reached the time when, without humiliation, he could humble himself to his native sovereign. With Schiller's wild love for liberty, he never was without that loyalty, which is almost inborn with the children of the North. He wrote to the Duke of Würtemberg such a letter as that loyalty 1793.

* About this time Schiller's sister-in-law, according to the German law, annulled her marriage with M. von Beulwitz. She afterwards married Wilhelm von Wolzogen, attached to her, as we have before said, from his earliest youth. She also joined the Schillers at Heilbronn.

might dictate; he received no direct reply, but was informed, privately, 'that the Duke would be ignorant of his movements if he re-entered Würtemberg.' Schiller then repaired to Ludwigsburg; where he was in the immediate neighbourhood of his father's house, and under the medical care of one of his early Sept. 14, 1793. friends, von Hoven, now Court physician. Here he first enjoyed the happiness he had long coveted; he became a father. His earnest, manly, and affectionate nature was precisely that which finds children at once a charge and a blessing. Now he would play for the hour together with his "Gold-son, his heart's Karl," * as he named his first-born; now shut himself up to study Quintilian, on the plan of education to be pursued.

Those who remembered the youth of Schiller were startled by the change which years and circumstance had effected; all that was sharp and hard in his character was gone. His early fire was softened—it warmed more and alarmed less; there was far greater grace in his demeanour. His ancient neglect of appearance and dress was replaced by a decent elegance; his even humour scarcely allowed them to recognise the impetuous and stormy stripling they had known ten years before.† But, alas! with the mental change had come the physical; the features were drawn and hollow, the complexion wan and haggard. Illness frequently confined him to his bed—Kant and Homer his companions; and at this time the grand outline of 'Wallenstein,' before chalked out, began to receive colour and fullness; he devoted himself to its composition principally at night, diversifying the poetical task with the first sketch of his 'Philosophical Essay upon Æsthetical Cultivation.'

During his residence at Ludwigsburg the Grand

* Conz. Schwab. Hoffmeister.
† Von Hoven, ap. Mad. von Wolzogen.

Duke Karl died.* Schiller was asked by his father to congratulate the Duke's successor in a poem—we need scarcely say that he refused. He could Oct. 24, 1793. not seem to rejoice at the death of a man who had been both his benefactor and his persecutor. Schiller was never more himself than when, standing by his sovereign's grave, with von Hoven, he spoke thus touchingly :—" Here rests this once active restless man ! He had great faults as a Prince, greater yet as an individual. But the first were overwhelmed by his high qualities, and the remembrance of the last must be buried with the dead. I say to thee, therefore, if thou hearest one speak of him disparagingly, as he lies there—trust that man *not !*—he is no good, at least, he is no noble man." At Ludwigsburg he formed an acquaintance with Cotta the bookseller, which had considerable influence on his later labours. In connection with this publisher, a new literary periodical, the 'Horen,' was chalked out, and a new political journal, intended to take the lead over all its German contemporaries. Of this last Schiller proposed to assume the editorship ; but his growing disinclination for objects less noble than the art of which Philosophy had brought him clearer and sublimer views, induced him happily to resign this notion. The political journal was, however, set up by the publisher, and exists to-day in high repute, under the well-known name of the 'Allgemeine Zeitung.'

* Biographers have raised a doubt if Schiller had removed from Heilbronn to Ludwigsburg before the Duke's death. But it seems quite clear that he was at Ludwigsburg early in September, since von Hoven, who resided at Ludwigsburg, attended his wife in her confinement,—Sept. 14th.

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# CHAPTER X.

## THIRD PERIOD.

The Horen and Musenalmanach — Two deaths in Schiller's family— Return from philosophy to poetry — The summer-house — Influence of Goethe on Schiller's genius—Appearance of Wallenstein.

IN May, 1794, Schiller returned to Jena, his body worn to a shadow;* his mind more than ever vigorous and resolved. Here he found the charm of a friendship more complete, and more sympathetic alike in intellect and in taste, than he had yet known. Wilhelm von Humboldt had settled at Jena, with a charming wife, whom he had lately married;—the two families contracted the closest intimacy. The undertaking of the 'Horen' was now seriously commenced, as a monthly Periodical, with the assistance of the greatest names in Germany,—Goethe, Herder, Jacobi, Matthisson, &c. In this journal Schiller desired to consummate an idea which had long haunted him, and which had been but imperfectly developed in the 'Thalia.' It may be said that this idea had grown out of the vast and luminous humanity of Herder, and ripened under the influence to which Herder was most opposed—that of Kant. The journal was intended to merge all that belonged to sect, to party, and the day, and devote itself to all that could interest the common family of man; so far, this was akin to Herder; but Schiller sought the interest, not in broad and popular topics, but in that æsthetical cultivation—that development of ideal beauty, which, since his study of Kant, he regarded as the flower and apex of human accomplishment. But the enterprise of this periodical, memorable in much, is so principally on account of

* Goethe thought, on seeing Schiller, that he had scarcely a fortnight's life in him.—Hoffmeister. Eckermann.

the union it established between Goethe * and Schiller —an union inestimable to both, and therefore to the world. Hitherto, these eminent men had moved in separate orbits; and Goethe's calm kindness to his great rival had not advanced to intimacy; but now the friendship Goethe felt for Schiller's wife, whom he had known from her childhood; the ties formed by acquaintances in common; and that power of attracting others to his designs, which Goethe himself has remarked in Schiller; drew them closely together, and served to form a bond which death only could dissolve. Goethe says, with noble candour, in his correspondence, "I really know not what might have become of me, without the impulse received from Schiller;"—and he proceeds to enumerate the writings which had never been produced, but for the co-operation of the only man from whom—had Goethe been one fraction less than Goethe—he would have been kept aloof by jealousy and alarm. Into this journal Schiller, appointed chief editor, poured some of the finest thoughts to be found in his prose writings; embodied in the form of philosophical criticism. Here too, and in the 'Musenalmanach,' an annual publication, also undertaken in conjunction with Goethe, somewhat later, appeared the immortal lyrics, which perhaps established the most popular and indisputable of Schiller's claims to admiration, purely and singly as the Poet. In this last periodical finally flashed forth those Epigrams, under the name of Xenien; sometimes personal and caustic, sometimes thoughtful and ideal, which set the literary world of Germany in a blaze. The connection between Goethe and Schiller had excited much jealous hostility amongst many lesser writers; an hostility wreaked upon the 'Horen,' and avenged in the 'Musenalmanach' by these laconic sarcasms. The sensation they excited was prodigious; though

* We need scarcely say that Goethe's fame and position had prodigiously increased since the publication of Schiller's 'Robbers.'

they can inspire but a lukewarm interest in the public of a foreign country.* Many of the more personal epigrams Schiller had the grace to withdraw from the subsequent collection of his poems; and in this withdrawal he could afford to sacrifice what critics have termed his best. In the midst of these labours he had the misfortune to lose his youngest sister, Nannette, a girl of promise and beauty; and in the same year, after a lingering disease, his father. He felt both losses acutely; the last perhaps the most: but in his letters it pleases us to see the philosopher return to the old childlike faith in God, the reliance on Divine goodness for support in grief, the trust in Divine mercy for the life to come. For it has been remarked with justice that, while Schiller's *reason* is often troubled in regard to the fundamental truths of religion, his *heart* is always clear. The moment death strikes upon his affections, the phraseology of the schools vanishes from his lips—its cavils and scruples from his mind: and he comforts himself and his fellow-mourners with the simple lessons of Gospel resignation and Gospel hope.

1796.

About this period Schiller began to turn wearily from the studies which had for years occupied his intellect and influenced his genius. He felt that he had given himself too much to abstract speculation, too little to the free poetic impulse. "It is high time," he says, in a letter to Goethe, "that for a while I should close the Philosophy Shop." He returned with ardour to the grand outline of his 'Wallenstein,' commenced years ago; long suspended, never forgotten. He yearned for some escape from the learned and arid atmosphere around him, some quiet

* Nevertheless, their effect upon German literature yet endures. Mr. Carlyle observes—('Miscellanies,' vol. i. p. 67)—that "the war of all the few good heads in the nation with all the many bad ones, began in Schiller's Musenalmanach for 1797;" and adds that, "since the age of Luther, there has scarcely been seen such strife and stir in the intellect of Europe." We do not quite subscribe to Mr. Carlyle's admiration for "the new critical doctrine," which dates from the Xenien.

retreat in which he could be alone with his genius—a summer-house with a garden! At length, this modest desire which literally seemed to haunt him was realised. Not far from Jena, to the south-west of the town, he purchased a garden, and built himself a kind of pavilion, with a single chamber. The site commanded a wide and noble prospect. Placed on the brow of a hill, up which the garden climbed, the summer-house overlooked the valley of the Saale, and the hanging pines of a neighbouring forest.* "There," says Goethe, in his Prologue to the 'Lay of the Bell'—

> "There, deck'd he the fair garden watch-tower; whence
> Listening he loved the voice of stars to hear,
> Which to the no less ever-living sense
> Made music, mystic, yet through mystery clear!" *

Here then, in the summer months, did he devote himself, with a passion more fervent than in youth, to the divine faculty of creation. Often was the light seen at night streaming from the window, and the curious might even catch a glimpse of his tall shadowy figure walking to and fro the chamber; now halting to write down the verses which he first declaimed aloud, or to support the overstrained physical power with the fatal excitements, for which our own Byron had more excuse, and has found less mercy. It was his custom to have placed on the table not only strong coffee and chocolate, but champagne, and the far more irritating and pernicious wines of the Rhine. Thus would he labour the night through, till sleep, or rather exhaustion, came on at morning; and he never rose till late. Dearly purchased, indeed, was the luxury of these midnight watches; but who shall conceive their intense delight? Thus he speaks himself in his letter to Goethe, May, 1797, on his first occupation of his new abode :—" I greet you

* The house exists no more; upon its site is placed an urn dedicated to the memory of the poet.—*Doring.*

from my garden, on which I entered this day: a fair landscape surrounds me; the sun goes gently down; and the nightingales begin their warbles. All around serves to render me serene; and my first evening in my own ground and soil is of the fairest omen!"

It happened, perhaps fortunately, that, in the summer of 1797, Wilhelm von Humboldt left Jena for Italy. The influence that this eminent but over-refining intellect had exercised on Schiller, had not been on the whole favourable to his poetical genius;* it had withdrawn him too much from the broad and popular field in which poetry, of the highest order and most extended empire, should seek its themes, into the 'Realm of Shadow,'—an obscure and metaphysical ideal. With the departure of Humboldt a new and far happier direction was given to Schiller's eager energies. More delivered to the luminous influence of Goethe, he became more imbued with his art. A friendly emulation with Goethe led to the production of Schiller's greatest, though simplest poetical productions—his Ballads. Goethe had already shown what epic interest and what subtle wisdom might be given to this form of verse: Schiller caught the inspiration, and composed his 'Diver,' the sublimest ballad in the German language. This was followed by 'The Glove,' 'The Cranes of Ibycus,' &c. &c. The years 1797-98 were signalised by these performances, in which the ripest art of Goethe seems united with the earliest force of Schiller.

Meanwhile, 'Wallenstein' still, though slowly, advanced to its elaborate completion. Schiller grudged no pains, and neglected no study, which might serve to fulfil in this great work, that ideal of excellence, for the achievement of which the necessary leisure had been so desired. He plunged into the recesses of astrology, and consulted the dreams of the Cabal-

* W. v. Humboldt, who was a devoted Kantian, seems to have supposed that poetry should be a riddle. It is always in the Abstract that he searches for the Beautiful.

ists, in order to treat with conscientious accuracy, and invest with solemn dignity, the favourite superstition of his hero.* Finally, in January 1799, after great preparation, the first portion of 'Wallenstein,' the 'Piccolomini,' was produced at Weimar. 1799. This was followed by the 'Death of Wallen- Ætat. 40. stein,' in April. If on the boards the interest of these several parts of the great whole was not so intense as Schiller's earlier dramas, he was fortunate in the cordial support of the few who ultimately decide the judgment of the many: the perusal of the work, subsequently published entire, served to deepen and to widen general admiration: the more 'Wallenstein' was examined and discussed, the more its profound beauty grew upon the world. Long after its publication, Goethe compared it to a wine, which wins upon the taste in proportion to its age. "This work," says Tieck, "at once rich and profound, is a monument for all times, of which Germany may be proud; and a national feeling—a native sentiment—is reflected from this pure mirror, teaching us a greater sense of what we are, and what we were." In fact, from that time Schiller became the National Poet of all Germany.

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## CHAPTER XI.

Residence at Weimar — Mary Stuart — Maid of Orleans — Bride of Messina — Reception at the Leipsic Theatre—Death of Schiller's mother — His life and habits — He is ennobled — Acquaintance with Madame de Stäel.

In the same year, 1799, by the advice of his physicians, Schiller removed to Weimar; the Grand

* Schiller was fond, for their own sake, of such ultra-philosophical inquiries. When at Heilbronn, 1793, he took much interest in animal magnetism.

Duke awarded him a pension of 1000 dollars, with a declaration that it should be doubled if illness should interfere with his other resources. His pecuniary circumstances were now competent to his moderate wants. 'Wallenstein' had brought him ample remuneration; the periodicals with which he was connected yielded a regular and liberal income. Nevertheless, his activity increased as the ruder necessities for exertion were diminished. Vast schemes were constantly before him. His genius itself became to him that spur which Poverty is to the genius of less earnest men. His play of 'Maria Stuart,' and 'The Lay of the Bell,' long premeditated, were his next productions; the last the greatest of his lyrics; the first the poorest of the dramas conceived in his riper years. To an Englishman nothing can be less satisfactory than Schiller's character of our great Elizabeth; and history is violated for insufficient causes, and from an indistinct and imperfect ideal. Madame de Staël thought more highly of the tragedy than it deserved, precisely because of its defects. The Mary and the Elizabeth of Schiller have much of the shallowness and the tinsel of French heroines.* The public for once judged accurately in admiring the scattered beauties of the piece, and condemning it as a whole. But sickness of body may perhaps have conduced to the faults of this play. After Schiller's death, this note, in his handwriting, was found: "The year 1800 I was very ill. Amidst pain was 'Mary Stuart' completed." But from this single fall Schiller's genius recovered itself with the bound of a Titan. The lovely image of the 'Maid of Orleans' haunted him. Already, with the commencement of the new year, 1801, three acts of this masterpiece of elevated romance were composed. In the autumn of the same year, during a visit to his friend Körner at Dresden, he laboured at the no less

* A. W. Schlegel, nevertheless, preferred, or affected to prefer, in many important respects, the 'Maria Stuart' to the 'Wallenstein.'

magnificent 'Bride of Messina,' unequalled as a lyrical tragedy. From Dresden he went to Leipsic, and was present at the performance of the 'Maid of Orleans.' Here one of those signal triumphs, which so rarely await living genius, awaited him. Scarce had the drop-scene fallen on the first act, than the house resounded with the cry, "*Es lebe Friedrich Schiller!*" The cry was swelled by all the force of the orchestra. After the performance the whole crowd collected in the broad place before the theatre to behold the Poet. Every head was bared as he passed along; while men lifted their children in their arms, to show the pride of Germany to the new generation—crying out, "*Dieser ist es*"—"That is he!"

From Leipsic Schiller returned to Weimar, where 'The Maid of Orleans' soon found its way to the boards; but its most gorgeous representation was at Berlin, where the New Theatre commenced with its performance on a scale of grandeur unprecedented on the German stage.

Schiller and Goethe were now almost inseparable. Together they directed the management of the Weimar Theatre, in which Schiller still entertained ideas of dramatic dignity too lofty for the social life of the moderns. Still did his manhood desire that for which his boyhood had been destined—the vocation of the Preacher;—and the stage still but suggested to him the office of the pulpit. "The pulpit and the stage are the only places for us," said he. He loved the Theatre; it was the sole public entertainment he habitually frequented. He was fond of the society of actors. He used to invite them to supper at the Stadthause, after the first, or even a more than usually successful, performance of one of his pieces. But generally, on returning from the Theatre, his mind was excited, and his emulation fired: And the midnight lamp at Weimar, as at Jena, attested that prodigious energy, which no infirmity slackened, and no glory could appease.

At this time he purchased a small house on the Esplanade—associated indeed with melancholy auspices: the same day he entered it his mother died. He felt in this affliction the rupture of the last tie of youth. He wrote to his sister—"Ah, dear Sister, so both the beloved Parents are gone from us, and the oldest bond that fastened us to life is rent! O let us, we three (including his other sister), alone surviving of our father's house, let us cling yet closer to each other; forget not that thou hast a loving brother. I remember vividly the days of our youth when we were all in all to each other. From that early existence our fate has divided us; but attachment—confidence, remain unchanged—unchangeable."

In his own circle lay his purest and best comfort. He loved to associate himself with the infant sports of his children. Many a time was he found with his boy playing* on the floor. Around him were assembled such friends as Genius rarely finds—men dear alike to his heart, and worthy of his intellect. At the Court he was grown familiar, and, though he frequented it less than his royal friends desired, it was no longer made displeasing to his tastes by the reserve of his earlier pride.

To his intellectual life Goethe had grown necessary,—while his more household friends were his old College acquaintance, Wilhelm von Wolzogen, and Wolzogen's wife,—the eloquent and enthusiastic sister of his own. But, withal, his passion for solitary wanderings was unabated. Often was he seen in the lonely walks of the Park, stopping abruptly to note down his thoughts in his tablets; often seated amidst the gloomy beeches and cypresses that clothe the crags, leading towards the Royal Pleasure House (the Romische Haus), and listening to the murmur of the neighbouring brook.

In 1802 he received from the Emperor of Austria a patent of nobility; it was obtained through the

* At the game called 'Lion and Dog,' on all fours.

unsolicited influence of the Duke of Weimar. He esteemed the honour at its just price—not with the vulgar scorn of the would-be cynic, still less with the elation of a vain convert from Republicanism. It pleased "Lolo and the children."

In the following year Madame de Staël visited Weimar, where her unequalled powers of conversation were more appreciated than in London. She herself has, in her 'Allemagne,' given us an interesting sketch of Schiller. He seems at first to have been more startled with the readiness of her powers, than charmed with their brilliancy, or penetrated with their depth. He says of her, not without justice, that her "*Naturel* and her feeling were better than her metaphysics." He is not quite pleased with that French clearness of understanding that made her averse to the Ideal Philosophy, which she believed led only to mysticism and superstition. He asserts somewhat too positively, "for what we call Poetry, she has no sense." He complains that "she can appreciate only in such works, the passionate, the rhetorical, the universal or popular. She does not prize the false, but she does not always recognise the true."

In a subsequent letter to his sister, Schiller appears to have found the illustrious Frenchwoman improved upon acquaintance, for he there expresses his admiration with more cordiality and less reserve. He now finds her a Phenomenon in her sex—for *esprit* and eloquence equalled but by few men—uniting with all the delicacy or finesse, obtained by intercourse with the great world, that rare earnestness and depth of mind obtained by most only through solitude.*

* In the sixth volume of the 'Correspondence between Goethe and Schiller,' and in Goethe's own 'Tag- und Jahres-Heft,' we may nevertheless perceive that Madame de Stäel was to both these illustrious Germans somewhat too oppressively brilliant and loquacious—somewhat approaching occasionally to that social infliction for which we have no phrase so expressive as that which one of our most eminent Englishmen somewhat bluntly applied to her :—" The cleverest woman in the world for such a bore, and the greatest bore in the world for so clever a woman."

In truth, whatever were the errors of Madame de Staël, there was in her character and her genius, a genuine nobleness akin to Schiller's; and though much of her fame, founded on her conversational eloquence, passed away with herself, her works still attest that union of imagination with intellect—enthusiasm with sense, which is never found but in minds of a great order, and in hearts which may indeed be misled by passion, but in which honesty and goodness are as instincts.

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## CHAPTER XII.

'Wilhelm Tell' — Ill health — Last sickness — Death — Burial.

And now, in that mysterious circle in which the life of genius so frequently appears to move, Schiller, nearing the close of his career, returned to the inspirations with which it had commenced. His first rude Drama had burned with the wild and half-delirious fever of Liberty;—Liberty, purified and made rational, gave theme and substance to his last. The euthanasia of the genius which had composed 'The Robbers,' was the 'Wilhelm Tell.' Goethe has observed, indeed, that, although the idea of freedom runs through all the works of Schiller, the earlier embodied the physical freedom, the later the ideal. But this cannot fairly be regarded as the distinction between 'The Robbers' and 'Wilhelm Tell.' It is no ideal liberty for which the simple mountaineers, whom Schiller has drawn in outlines so large and muscular, aspire and struggle; it is physical, practical, homely liberty—liberty of life and soil. It is this very practicability which really divides the 'Tell' from 'The Robbers:' in the last heaves the perturbed sigh for a social revolution,—for some liberty contrary to all the forms and the very substance of the

organised world; it is an unreasoning passion that would risk a chaos for the chance that again may go forth the words—"Let there be light!" But in 'Tell' the idea of liberty, intense and visible in itself, is yet circumscribed to the narrowest possible boundaries; it is but the struggle of an honest and universal people for independence, without one whisper of ambition, without one desire of revenge: it is a revolution portrayed in an anti-revolutionary spirit; throughout the whole breathes the condemnation of the French anarchy; it is an evoking of the true Florimel, that, beside her living and human Beauty, the false Florimel may dissolve into snow.*

In the spring of 1804 Schiller visited Berlin, at which city he was received with signal honours; in July we find him at Jena, where, while his wife was happily confined of her youngest daughter, his constitution was severely shaken by a feverish cold. He suffered much and frequently during the rest of the year, but his mental activity was undiminished: besides some of his minor poems, such as 'The Alp Hunter,' and 'The Lay of the Hill,' he was employed on a translation of Racine's 'Phèdre,' and the outline of the tragedy of 'Demetrius,' never completed.

He also, about this time or very little later, conceived the scheme of a Drama which, if suitably executed, would have been, perhaps, the most extraordinary of all his various compositions. The subject was to be the *French Police*—and the plot to have embraced all the evils and abuses of modern civilization. Such a work would indeed be of wide compass and noble uses, but it seems to require the space of a prose fiction, and it is difficult to comprehend how it could have been contracted into the limits, and expressed in the form, of a Poetical Drama. It is

* See Schiller's own poem, entitled 'William Tell,' in which his object is briefly and simply explained.

noticeable, that the singular sympathy with mankind which Schiller possessed, often makes him the father of ideas in others with whom no direct communication can be traced,—the seeds that spring up so lavishly in his humane intellect are dispersed by invisible winds to grow on every soil. This idea of depicting, by literary portraiture, the social ills of Civilization and France, is the main stock of more than half the French writers of our own day.—In Balzac, in Sand, in Sue, in Souvestre, living in the midst of the great whirlpool—are heard the echoes of the Thought which was only breathed inaudibly within the heart of the Poet-student of the tranquil Weimar. And with these recurrences to the peculiar inspirations of his youth, the desire of travel returned prophetically to one about to depart for ever from all earthly homes. He traced routes upon the chart, and spoke of plans and pilgrimages never to be realised.

The reperusal of Herder's 'Ideas on the History of Man'—to which (though he was often largely indebted to it) he did not before do justice *—seems also to have deepened his meditations upon Life, Nature, and Eternal Providence. "Christianity," he said to his gifted sister-in-law, "has stamped a new impression on Humanity, while it revealed a sublimer prospect to the soul." According to this witness, Madame von Wolzogen—the best, for the most household, evidence—his faith increased as his life drew nearer to its goal.

At length, after many preparatory warnings—visitings, under the name of catarrhal fever, of his constitutional pulmonary disease—Schiller was stricken with his last illness on the 28th of April, 1805; Goethe, who was just recovering from a

April, 1805.

* He said to Madame von Wolzogen, "I know not how it is, but this Book speaks to me after quite a new fashion." Herder and Schiller were not very familiarly intimate—they were *too like each other* for cordial concurrence. Both were essentially earnest, and therefore the differences between them resisted compromise.

dangerous illness, called on Schiller, whom he found leaving his house for the theatre. He was too unwell to accompany, too polished to detain him,—they parted for the last time at the threshold of Schiller's door. At the close of the performance Schiller felt himself seized with a feverish attack. A young friend, Henry Voss (son of the celebrated author of 'Luise,' &c.), led him home. On calling the next morning, Voss found him stretched on the sofa between sleep and waking. "Here I lie again!" he said in a hollow voice. As yet, however, he had no conception of his danger; he thought to have discovered a treatment to ensure his recovery. His mind for some days continued clear, and the chief regret he expressed was for the interruption to 'Demetrius.' But on the 6th of May he began to wander: on that day Voss, visiting him again, observed that his eyes were deep sunken; every nerve twitched convulsively: they brought him some lemons, at which he caught eagerly, but laid them down again with a feeble hand. Delirium came on: he raved of soldiers and war; the word Lichtenberg, or Leuchtenburg (the former the name of an author whom he had been lately reading, the latter of a castle which he had long desired to visit), came often to his lips. On the evening of the 7th, his mind recovered; he wished to renew his customary conversations with his sister-in-law upon the proper theme and aims of tragedy; she prayed him to keep quiet; he answered, touchingly—"True; now, when no one understands me, and I no more understand myself, it is better that I should be silent." Shortly before, he had concluded some talk on death with these striking words: "Death can be no evil, for it is universal." And now the thought of eternity seems to have occupied his mind in its dreams; for in sleep he exclaimed, "Is that your hell?—is that your heaven?" He then raised his looks, and a soft smile came over his face. It

was, perhaps, on awaking from this sleep that he used those memorable words—"Now is life so clear!—so much is made clear and plain!"

In the evening he took some broth, and said to his friends that "he thought that night to sleep well, with God's will." His faithful servant, who watched him, said that, during the night, he recited many lines from 'Demetrius,' and once he called on God to preserve him from a long and tedious death-bed.

On the morning of the 8th of May he woke up composed, and asked for his youngest child. She was brought to him. He took the infant's hand in his own, and gazed at her long with a look of unspeakable sorrow. He then began to weep bitterly, kissed the young face with emotion, and beckoned to them to remove the child.

Towards the evening his sister-in-law approached his bed, and asked how he felt. "Better and better, calmer and calmer," was his answer. He then longed once more to see the sun; they drew aside the curtains; he looked serenely on the setting light. Nature received his farewell.

His sleep that night was disturbed; his mind again wandered; with the morning he had lost consciousness. He spoke incoherently, and chiefly in Latin. His last drink was champagne. Towards three in the afternoon came on the last exhaustion; the breath began to fail. Towards four, he would have called for naphtha, but the last syllable died on his lips;—finding himself speechless, he motioned that he wished to write something; but his hand could trace only three letters, in which was yet recognisable the distinct character of his writing. His wife knelt by his side; he pressed her hand. His sister-in-law stood with the physician at the foot of the bed, applying warm cushions to the cold feet. Suddenly a sort of electric shock came over his countenance; the head fell back; the deepest calm

settled on his face. His features were as those of one in a soft sleep.

The news of Schiller's death soon spread through Weimar. The theatre was closed; men gathered together in groups. Each felt as if he had lost his dearest friend. To Goethe, enfeebled himself by long illness, and again stricken by some relapse, no one had the courage to mention the death of his beloved rival. When the tidings came to Henry Meyer, who was with him, Meyer left the house abruptly, lest his grief might escape him. No one else had the courage to break the intelligence. Goethe perceived that the members of his household seemed embarrassed, and anxious to avoid him. He divined something of the fact, and said, at last, "I see,—Schiller must be very ill." That night they overheard him—the serene man, who seemed almost above human affection, who disdained to reveal to others whatever grief he felt when his son died—they overheard Goethe weep! In the morning he said to a friend, "Is it not true that Schiller was very ill yesterday?" The friend (it was a woman) sobbed. "He is dead," said Goethe faintly. "You have said it," was the answer. "He is dead!" repeated Goethe, and covered his eyes with his hands.

The body was dissected; and it was some consolation to the mourners to know that much prolongation of life would have been beyond the art of medicine; the left lung was destroyed, the ventricles of the heart wasted, the liver indurated, the gall-bladder extremely swelled. A son of the great Herder, one of the physicians who examined the body, thought it impossible that, under any circumstances, he could have lived half a year, nor that without great suffering.

Schiller was buried in the night of the 11th of May; twelve young men of good family bore the coffin; the heavens were clouded, but the nightin-

gales sang loud and full. As the train proceeded, the sound of a horse's hoofs was heard; a rider dismounted and followed the procession—it was Wilhelm von Wolzogen, who had heard the fatal news at Naumberg, and hastened to pay the last respect to the remains of his college friend. As the bier was lowered, the wind suddenly scattered the mists, the moon broke forth, and its light streamed upon the coffin. When all was over, the skies were suddenly obscured again.

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## CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

### CRITICAL SUMMARY.

So, at the early age of forty-five, closed the earthly career of Friedrich Schiller. In this brief epitome of his life the reader will not fail to perceive the peculiar distinctions of his character and mind: his singular ardour for Truth; his solemn conviction of the duties of a Poet; his prevailing idea, that the Minstrel should be the Preacher,—that Song is the sister of Religion in its largest sense,—that the Stage is the Pulpit to all sects, all nations, all time. No author ever had more earnestness than Schiller,—his earnestness was the real secret of his greatness; this combination of philosophy and poetry, this harmony between genius and conscience, sprang out of the almost perfect, almost unrivalled equality of proportions which gave symmetry to his various faculties.* With him the imagination and the intellect

* Hence Mr. Carlyle well observes, "Sometimes we suspect that it is the very grandeur of his general powers which prevents us from exclusively admiring his poetic genius. We are not lulled by the siren song of poetry, because her melodies are blended with the clearer, manlier tones of serious reason, and of honest though exalted feeling."—Carlyle's *Life of Schiller.*

were so nicely balanced, that one knows not which was the greater; owing, happily, to the extensive range of his studies, it may be said that, as the intellect was enriched, the imagination was strengthened. Unlike Goethe's poet in 'Wilhelm Meister,' he did not sing "as the bird sings," from the mere impulse of song, but he rather selected Poetry as the most perfect form for the expression of noble fancies and high thoughts. "His conscience was his Muse."* It was thus said of him with truth, "that his poetical excellence was of later growth than his intellectual;" and as the style of Lord Bacon ascended to its sonorous beauty in proportion as his mind became more stored, and his meaning more profound, so the faculty of expression ripened with Schiller in exact ratio to the cultivation of his intellect. His earliest compositions were written with difficulty and labour, and he was slow in acquiring thorough mastery over the gigantic elements of his language. Perhaps this very difficulty (for nothing is so fatal to the mental constitution as that verbal dysentery which we call facility) served both to increase his passion for his art, and to direct it to objects worthy the time and the care which, in his younger manhood, he was compelled to bestow upon his compositions. From this finely-poised adjustment between the reasoning and the imaginative faculties, came the large range of his ambition, not confined to Poetry alone, but extending over the whole field of Letters. We can little appreciate Schiller, if we regard him only as the author of 'Wallenstein,' and the 'Lay of the Bell;' wherever the genius of his age was astir, we see the flight of his wing and the print of his footstep. While, in verse, he has made experiments in almost every combination, except the epic (and in that he at one time conceived and sketched a noble outline), embracing the drama, the ode, the elegy, the narrative, the

* "Sa conscience étoit sa Muse."—De Stael.

didactic, the epigrammatic, and in each achieved a triumph,—in Prose, he has left monuments only less imperishable in the various and rarely reconcilable lands of romance, of criticism, of high-wrought philosophical speculation, and impartial historical research. His romance of the 'Ghost-Seer' is popular in every nation, and, if not perfect of its kind, the faults are those of a super-exuberant intellect, which often impedes, by too discursive a dialogue, the progress of the narrative, and the thread of the events. In this he resembled Godwin rather than Scott. If with 'St. Léon' and 'Caleb Williams' the 'Ghost-Seer' rests in the second class of popularity, it is because, as with them, it requires a reflective mind to seize all its beauties, and yield to all its charms.

In History, if Schiller did not attain to the highest rank, it was not because he wanted the greatest qualities of the historian, but because the subjects he selected did not admit of their full development. But while his works in that direction are amongst the most charming, impartial, and justly popular, of which his nation boasts, he has shown, in the introductory Lecture, delivered by himself at Jena, how grand his estimate of history was. His notions on history are worth whole libraries of history itself.* As a Philosophical Essayist, he is not perhaps very original (though in borrowing from Kant he adds much that may fairly be called his own), and rigid metaphysicians have complained of his vagueness and obscurity.† But his object was not that of severe and logical reasoning; it was to exalt the art to which most of his essays were devoted; to make the

* Of this lecture—"What is universal History, and with what views should it be studied?"—Mr. Carlyle observes justly, "There perhaps has never been in Europe another course of history sketched out on principles so magnificent and philosophical."—Carlyle's *Life of Schiller.*

† Mr. Carlyle, however, estimates the logical precision of Schiller more highly than many of Schiller's own countrymen; and speaks of the Æsthetic Letters as "one of the deepest, most compact pieces of reasoning he is anywhere acquainted with."—*Miscell.* p. 62.

great and the pure popular; to educate the populace up to purity and greatness. The ideal philosophy, as professed by Schiller, was, in fact, a kind of mental as well as moral Christianity, which was to penetrate the mind as well as the soul—extend to the arts of man as well as his creeds; to make all nature a temple—all artists priests: Christianity in spirit and effect it was—for its main purpose was that of the Gospel faith, viz., to draw men out of this life into a purer and higher air of being—to wean from virtue the hopes of reward below—to make enjoyment consist in something beyond the senses. What holy meditation was to the saints of old, the ideal of Æsthetic art was to the creed of Schiller. Therefore, his philosophy, in strict accordance with his poetry, was designed not so much to convince as to ennoble; it addresses the soul rather than the understanding; —and, therefore, though in the wide compass of Schiller's works there are passages which would wound the sincere and unquestioning believer; though in his life there were times when he was overshadowed by the doubts that beset inquiry; though, in the orthodox and narrower sense of the word Christian, it would be presumptuous to define his sect, or decide on his belief; the whole scope and tendency of his works, taken one with the other, are, like his mind, eminently Christian. No German writer—no writer, not simply theological—has done more to increase, to widen, and to sanctify the reverent disposition that inclines to Faith.

As Schiller's poetry was the flower of his mind, so in his poetry are to be found, in their most blooming produce, all the faculties that led him to philosophy, criticism, and history. In his poetry are reflected all his manifold studies. Philosophy, criticism, and history pour their treasures into his verse. One of a mind so candid, and a life so studious, could not fail to be impressed by many and progressive

influences. Schiller's career was one education, and its grades are strongly marked. Always essentially humane, with a heart that beat warmly for mankind, his first works betray the intemperate zeal and fervour of the Revolution which then in its fair outbreak misled not more the inexperience of youth than the sagacity of wisdom; a zeal and fervour increased in Schiller by the formal oppression of academical tyranny;* a nature unusually fiery and impatient; and a taste terribly perverted by the sentiment of Rousseau and the bombast of Klopstock. Friendship, love, indignation, poverty, and solitude, all served afterwards to enrich his mind with the recollection of strong passions and keen sufferings: and, thrown much upon himself, it is his own life and his own thoughts that he constantly reproduces on the stage. The perusal of Shakspeare has less visible and direct influence on his genius than he himself seems to suppose;—the study of History has far more. From the period in which he steadily investigated the past, his characters become more actual; his *Humanity* more rational and serene. He outgrows Rousseau; the revolutionary spirit fades gradually from his mind; he views the vast chronicle of man not with the fervour of a boy, but the calm of a statesman. At this time he begins to deserve the epithet Goethe has emphatically bestowed on him—he becomes '*practical*.' But with the study of history comes the crisis of doubt, the period of his scepticism and his anguish. From this influence he emerged into the purer air, which he never afterwards abandoned, of the Ideal Philosophy. Here he found a solution of his doubts —a religion for his mind. Almost at the same time that his intellect is calmed and deepened by philosophy, his taste acquires harmonious symmetry and repose from the study of the ancient masterpieces.

* Thus Schiller himself calls his 'Robbers' "a monster produced by the unnatural union of Genius with Thraldom."

From that period, his style attains its final beauty of simplicity combined with stateliness, and vigour best shown by ease. A happy marriage, a fame assured, an income competent to his wants, serve permanently to settle into earnest and serious dignity a life hitherto restless—an ambition hitherto vague and undefined. Thenceforth he surrenders himself wholly to the highest and purest objects human art can attain. His frame is attacked, his health gone for ever; but the body has here no influence on the mind. Schiller lives in his art; he attains to the ideal existence he has depicted; he becomes the Pure Form, the Archetype, the *Gestalt*, that he has described in his poem of the 'Ideal and the Actual;' living divorced from the body—in the heavenly fields a spirit amongst the gods. It is now that we trace in his works the influences of two master-minds with which he lived familiarly—William von Humboldt and Goethe.* The first we see in his mystical, typical, and Kantian compositions; the last in the more lucid and genial spirit of his lyrics and his narratives. By degrees, the latter happily prevailed. As Humboldt receded from the scene, and his intercourse with Goethe mellowed, Schiller comes out of the cloud into the light. He recognises the true ideal of art; the clear expression of serene thought; the Grecian Athenè prevailing over the typical Egyptian Naith. The last influence produced on him by profane literature was in the works of Calderon, then just translated; and which, according to the testimony of Goethe, deeply and sensibly impressed him. But he did not survive long enough for that impression to become apparent in his own compositions.

We omit all detailed criticism of Schiller's Dramas; for they have been made more or less familiar to the

* The intimacy between Goethe and Schiller was the more remarkable, because it was almost purely intellectual. Goethe says, in a conversation with Eckermann, "that there was no necessity for especial friendship between them—their common efforts made their noblest bond."

reader, by various translations, by repeated notices in our popular journals, and by the attention they have received in the biographical work of Mr. Carlyle. Our limits would not permit us to do justice to works requiring lengthened and elaborate consideration, or to enter into a controversy with other critics, from whom we may differ as to their merits or defects. Briefly, it appears to us, that, like the dramas of many great poets, from Byron up even to Shakspeare, their highest merit is not that purely dramatic. Perhaps of *this* quality there is more in the earlier than the later Tragedies. 'The Robbers' is still upon the whole the most frequently acted of all Schiller's Plays.* Glancing over his riper performances, his grandest, in point of intellect, is 'Wallenstein:' in point of verbal poetry, of music and expression, 'The Bride of Messina' is the loveliest: in point of feeling and conception 'The Maid of Orleans' most engrosses the heart and enlists the fancy. But the one in which Schiller, with the fullest success, emancipates his art from himself—in which his own individuality the least moulds and influences his creations—seems to us the 'Wilhelm Tell.' As his chief merit, whether as Man or Artist, lay in his earnestness, so in that earnestness lay his main defect as a writer for the Stage. He could not, as the stage-writer really ought, reflect indifferently—*veluti in speculum*—vice and virtue†—the mean and the

* The true test of the *Dramatic* faculty, apart from the Poetical, is its practical adaptability to the stage. A play of very inferior literary merit may keep its hold on the boards, to the exclusion of works infinitely more poetical, by its dramatic qualities;—viz., by the correspondence between the action of its plot and emotions the most generally popular. . . . Hence the vitality on the stage of plays that are almost despised in the library—such as the 'Stranger,' 'Pizarro,' &c. Kotzebue's dramatic talent, as separate from intellectual excellence or poetic inspiration, is positively wonderful, and deserves the minutest study of all practical writers for the stage. Of this, Schiller was fully aware.

† Thus Madame de Staël well observes, "that he lived, spoke, and acted as if the wicked did not exist; and when in his works he described them, it was with more exaggeration and less depth than if he had really known them."

sublime. He could not escape the temptation of placing in the mouths of his characters the sentiments he desired to enforce upon the world—even though the occasion was inappropriate. All his favourite characters talk too much—and too much as Schiller thought and Schiller felt. Morally one of the least selfish of men,—intellectually he is one of the most egotistical. Who that held the doctrine that the Dramatist, the Poet, should be the Preacher, could fail to be so? He loved Truth too much to suffer her to be silent, whenever he had occasion to make her oracles be heard. The complex varieties —the sinuous windings of human character, are, for the most part, without the pale of his conscientious and stately genius. He thus avoids (at least in his later works) the vulgar reproach attached to Goethe, and which might with equal truth be urged against Shakspeare, viz. that he makes error amiable, and clothes crime with charm. His characters are, for the most part, embodiments of great principles and great truths, rather than the flexile and multiform representations of human nature, which, while idealised into poetry, still render the creations of Shakspeare so living and distinct.

Schiller is thus, on the whole, greater as a Poet than a Dramatist—so, indeed, is Shakspeare, but from entirely different and opposite causes: Shakspeare, from the exquisite subtlety of his imagination, which, in a Caliban, an Ariel, a Titania, escapes the grossness of representation; Schiller, from too statue-like a rigidity and hardness: we do not see the veins at play beneath his marble.

It is in the Collection of his Minor Poems that Schiller's true variety is best seen—a variety not of *character*, but of thought, of sentiment, of fancy, of diction, and of metre. In those poems are the confessions of his soul, as well as the exercises of his

genius. For, with a little modification, what Jean Paul said of Herder, may be said of Schiller, "that he was less a Poet than a Poem,"—and therefore, all his poetry should be studied as illustrations of the Human Poem—Schiller himself!

Any comparison between Goethe and Schiller would be, and has been, but a futile attempt at comparing dissimilarities.* We shall waste no time in attempting to show where one is greater or the other less. Brothers they were in life—let them shine together in equal lustre—the immortal Dioscuri—twin stars! Nor shall we touch upon those theories of art which the mention of Schiller and Goethe calls into discussion amongst the metaphysical critics of their country. We cannot invent a set of school terms to prove, without farther discussion, that one poem is great because objective—another not so great because subjective. Beauty escapes all technical definitions; the art of estimating beauty—viz. *criticism* —must follow the genius it would examine through all its capricious windings, and admire equally, Milton where subjective,—and where objective, Shakspeare.

There is a class of poets in which self-consciousness is scarcely perceptible; another in which it is pervading and intense. In the former class, Shakspeare and Homer tower pre-eminent; in the latter, we recognise Dante and Milton—Schiller, Byron, and Burns.

To the last two, Schiller, in some attributes of his genius, bears a greater resemblance† than perhaps to any of his own countrymen; resembling them in the haunting sense of individuality—in the power of blending interest for the poet with delight in the poem—in the subordination of sentiment to feeling

* Goethe himself is reported to have said, "The Germans are great fools to quarrel which should take the prior rank, Schiller or myself—they ought only to be too happy that they have us both."

† Goethe himself has remarked the similarity in some points between Byron and Schiller.

—in the embodiment of what is peculiar in forms the most widely popular;—resembling them in these points, differing from them no less widely in others, according as the different modifications of life, habits, education, heart, and conscience, differ in the English noble, the German student, the Scotch peasant. But in all three there is this characteristic of a common tribe—their poetry expresses themselves. To borrow the idea of Schiller himself, they seek truth in the heart within—others in the world without,—by each order of inquirer can truth equally be found: Or, to avail ourselves again of Schiller's accurate and noble distinction, whether light breaks into the variety of colours in which its individuality is lost, or unites the colours into a single shimmer, it is still the light which vivifies and illumes the world.

Mr. Carlyle quotes, with some approval, a dogmatic assertion, "that readers till their twenty-fifth year usually prefer Schiller; after their twenty-fifth year, Goethe." * If Herder and Novalis are right in their belief that the true elements of wisdom and poetry are found freshest and purest in the young, this is no disparagement to Schiller. It is, certainly, only in proportion as the glow for all that is noble in thought and heroic in character fades from the weaker order of mind, amidst the cavils, disgusts, and scepticism of later life, that the halo around the genius of Schiller, which is but a reflection of all that is noble and heroic, wanes also into feebler lustre. For the stronger nature, which still "feels as the enthusiast, while it learns to see as the world-wise," † . . . there is no conceivable reason why Schiller should charm less in maturity than youth.

Finally, as, in the life of Schiller, the student may gather noble and useful lessons of the virtue of manly perseverance—of the necessity of continued self-

* Carlyle's Miscellanies, vol. iii. p. 65.
† Schiller, 'Light and Warmth.'

cultivation—of the alliance between labour and success—between honesty and genius;—so in his Poems will be found, living and distinct, a great and forcible intellect ever appealing to the best feelings—ever exalting those whom it addresses—ever intent upon strengthening man in his struggles with his destiny, and uniting with a golden chain the outer world and the inner to the celestial throne.

END OF VOL. I.

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